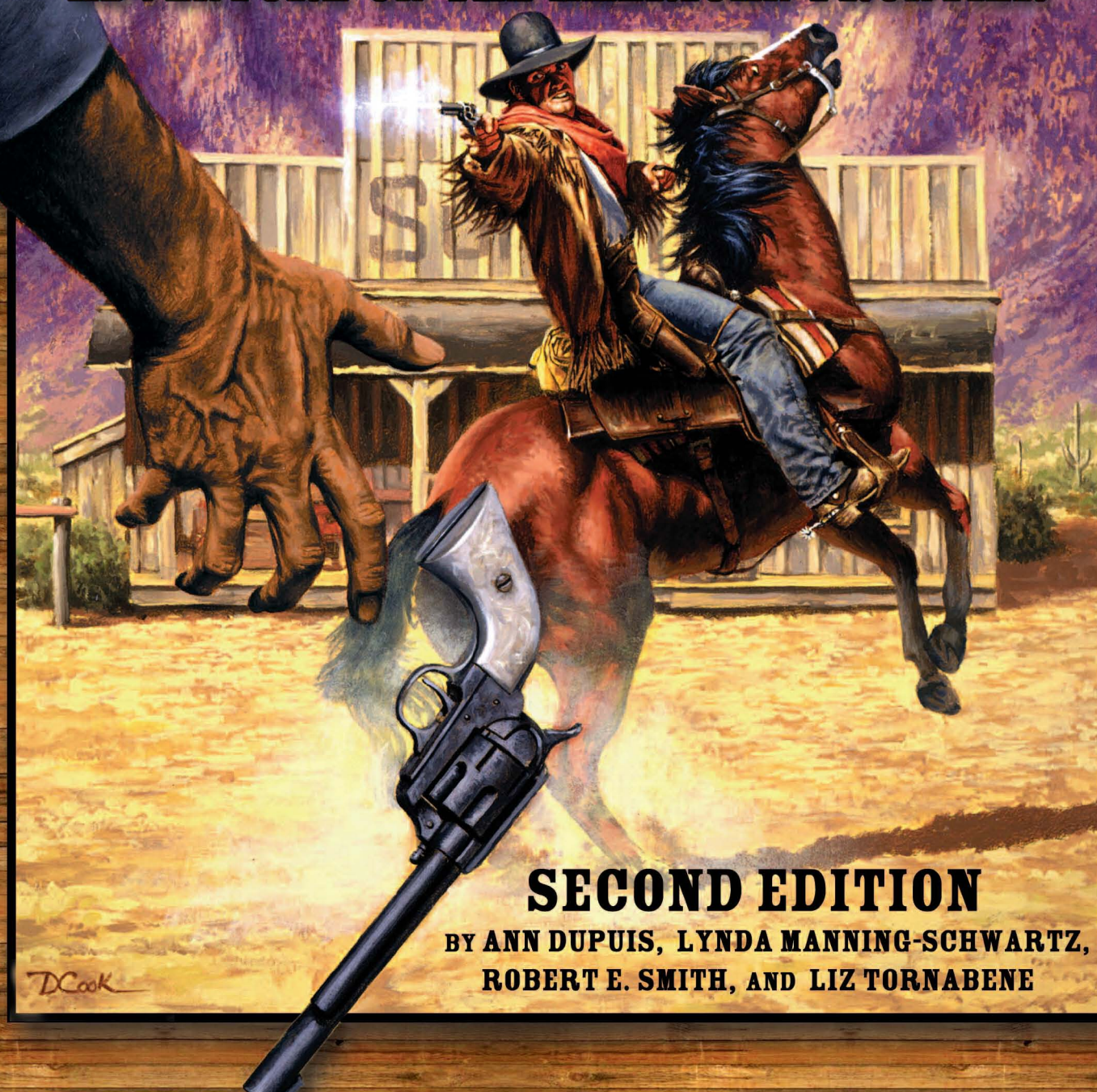


G U R P S<sup>®</sup>

# OLD WEST

ADVENTURE ON THE AMERICAN FRONTIER



**SECOND EDITION**

BY ANN DUPUIS, LYNDA MANNING-SCHWARTZ,  
ROBERT E. SMITH, AND LIZ TORNABENE

**STEVE JACKSON GAMES**



# HOW THE WEST WAS WON

The American frontier was a legend, even while it was happening. Gunfighters, Indians, cowboys, miners, and mountain men, the Pony Express, the Texas Rangers and the outlaws they fought, the “rust-eaters” who pushed the rails west, the settlers battling fire, floods, stampedes, and sickness . . . their adventures made the nation what it is today!

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## THE DESPERADOS:

Written by  
**Ann Dupuis,  
Lynda Manning-  
Schwartz,  
Robert E. Smith,  
and Liz Tornabene**

Edited by  
**Loyd Blankenship,  
Andrew Hackard,  
Steve Jackson,  
and Monica Stephens**

Cover by  
**David Cook**

Illustrated by  
**Loston Wallace**

Maps by  
**Ann Dupuis**

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# GURPS®

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By ANN DUPUIS,  
LYNDA MANNING-SCHWARTZ,  
ROBERT E. SMITH,  
AND LIZ TORNABENE

Second Edition: Revised and Expanded by  
STEPHEN DEDMAN

Additional Material by MIKE HURST

Edited by LOYD BLANKENSHIP,  
ANDREW HACKARD, STEVE JACKSON,  
AND MONICA STEPHENS

Cover by DAVID COOK

Illustrated by LOSTON WALLACE

Additional Illustrations by ALEX FERNANDEZ  
AND TOPPER HELMERS

Cartography by ANN DUPUIS

**GURPS** System Design by STEVE JACKSON

Managing Editor ALAIN H. DAWSON

Art Director PHILIP REED

Production Manager RUSSELL GODWIN

Production and Typography by  
ALEX FERNANDEZ

## SECOND EDITION



Playtesters: Bill Annand, "Big Horse" Bailey's Gang (Tyrone D. Carpenter II, Paul Dupuis, Juliette Hartel, Mark Klein, Laird Popkin, and Kevin Weishaar), Chuck Bickle, Drew Bittner, Larry Cohen, Robert Gilson, Joel M. Halpern, Mike Hurst, Carl Hullet, Ben V. Kloepper, Richard Layton, Brian Meyer, Walter Milliken, Steffan O'Sullivan, Victor Reyna, William B. Rhodes, Brian Seeley, Stephen Shoup, Brett Slocum, Greg Ventura, Mike Wallace, Robin Zunino, and the SJG-BBS Illuminati.

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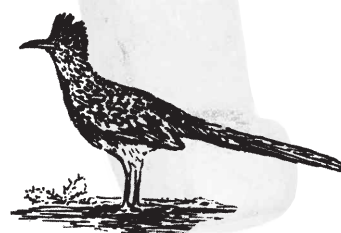
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## ABOUT GURPS

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**Pyramid** ([www.sjgames.com/pyramid](http://www.sjgames.com/pyramid)). Our online magazine includes new rules and articles for **GURPS**. It also covers the hobby's top games – *Dungeons & Dragons*, *Traveller*, *World of Darkness*, *Call of Cthulhu*, *Shadowrun*, and many more – and other Steve Jackson Games releases like *In Nomine*, *INWO*, *Car Wars*, *Toon*, *Ogre*, and more. And Pyramid subscribers also have access to playtest files online, to see (and comment on) new books before they're released.

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The **GURPS Old West** Web page is at [www.sjgames.com/gurps/books/oldwest](http://www.sjgames.com/gurps/books/oldwest).

## PAGE REFERENCES

See **GURPS Compendium I**, p. 181, for a list of abbreviations for **GURPS** titles, or for the most recent list, visit our Web site at [www.sjgames.com/gurps/abbrevs.html](http://www.sjgames.com/gurps/abbrevs.html).

Any page reference that begins with a B refers to **GURPS Basic Set, Third Edition Revised**; e.g., p. B22 refers to page 22 of the **Basic Set**. Also, CI refers to **GURPS Compendium I** and CII refers to **Compendium II**.

# INTRODUCTION

Stagecoach holdups . . . Indian raids . . . shootouts at high noon . . . stampedes . . . greedy railroad barons. The Wild West is a gold mine of adventure for roleplaying!

**GURPS Old West** covers the whole 19th century, giving special emphasis to the classic period of the Old West (1865-1885). It runs from the first overland explorations through white settlement to the last days of the frontier. There's also plenty of information about everything Western – the Pony Express, the gold rushes, steamboats and railroads, cattle drives and cow towns, outlaws and lawmen, border wars and wars with the Indians, and how the country grew out of it all.

Dozens of character types, skills, advantages, and disadvantages help you create any conceivable type of Western character, from town drunk to railroad baron, soiled dove to revival preacher. Authentic equipment lists outfit your character from head to toe. Carefully researched, detailed background information lets you build an adventure or campaign with highly realistic detail, or simply an adventure with Western flavor. There's something for everyone here, with rules for train robbery, mounted combat, and ritual magic – enough fun for anyone, even a reckless cowboy.

This book is the Old West as it should have been – liberally tinged with romance and heroics. But there's little need to stray from the truth. Nearly every Hollywood myth has its counterpart in history. But when choosing how much reality to include in an Old West campaign, the GM should follow the advice of editor Edmond O'Brien in *The Man Who Shot Liberty Valance* – "If the facts conflict with the legend, print the legend."

## About the Authors

**Ann Dupuis** began roleplaying in 1978, and spends as much time as possible playing, gamemastering, writing and reading adventures. 1990 marked her first publications in the roleplaying world: an adventure in *Dungeon* magazine and two articles in *Roleplayer*. **Old West** was her first book, but she now has several more under her belt as proprietor of Grey Ghost Games. In her spare time, Ann rides, practices Shim Gum Do (Korean Sword), paints miniatures, and reads fantasy, science fiction, and mystery novels.

**Stephen Dedman** began roleplaying in 1977, and sold his first *Villains & Vigilantes* adventure in 1985. He's the author of **GURPS Dinosaurs** and the novels *The Art of Arrow Cutting* and *Foreign Bodies*, and co-author of **GURPS Martial Arts Adventures** and **GURPS Space Atlas 4**. Stephen lives in Western Australia, which is bigger and hotter than Texas.

**Liz Tornabene** began roleplaying in 1978, but did nothing of note after that until she cleverly escaped the snares and toils of the corporate world to rescue Ann from the impending **Old West** deadline. She is becoming a freelance writer and has several books and articles planned.

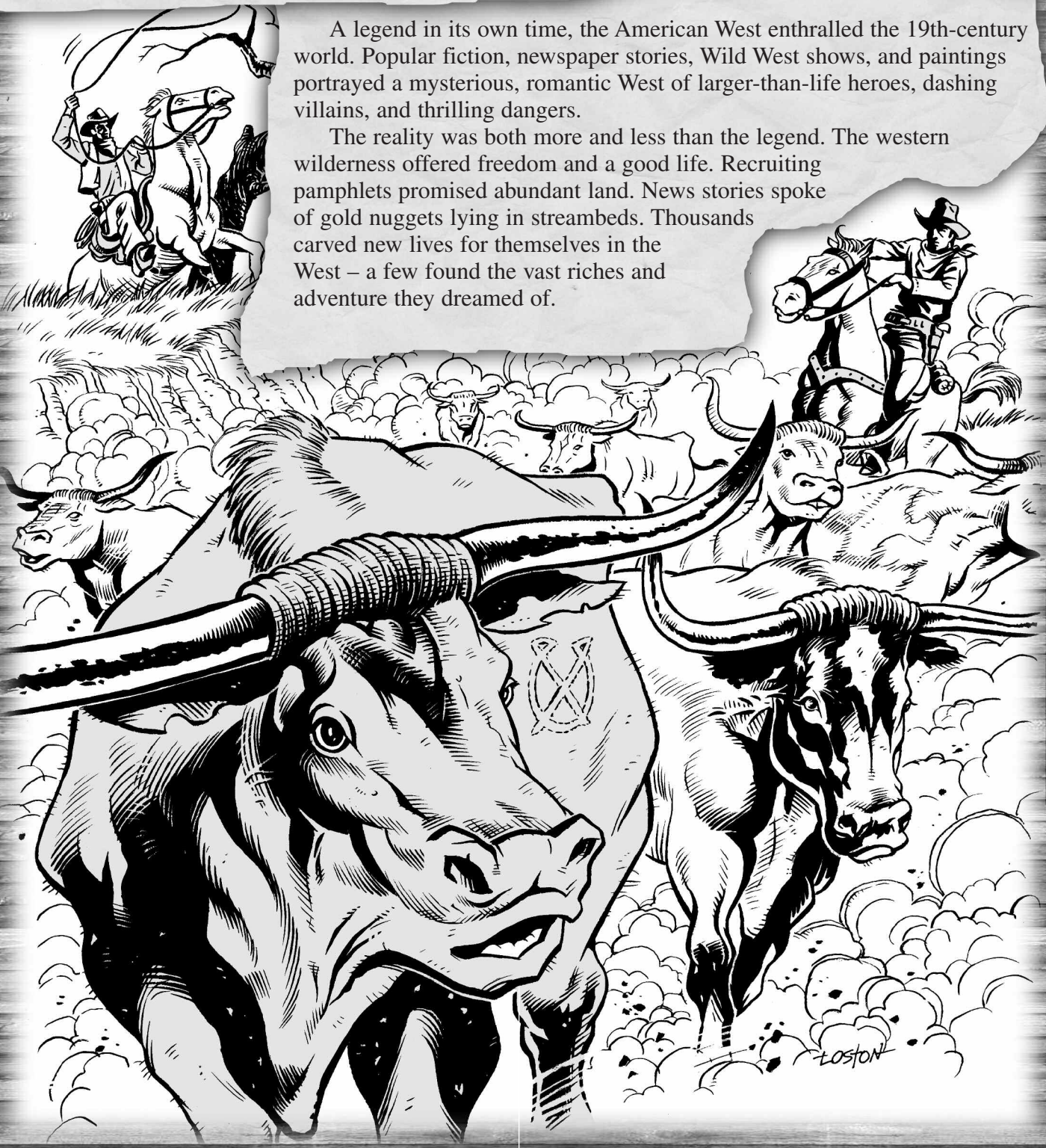
**Robert E. Smith** began playing miniatures in 1974. He then started roleplaying with M.A.R. Barker's *Empire of the Petal Throne*, which he enjoys to this day. Historical miniatures are his favorite, and he has written a set of miniature rules for the Civil War.

**Lynda Manning-Schwartz** grew up in Temple, Texas. Her grandparents owned a large ranch, but Lynda was frequently cautioned against "bothering the hands." Her hobbies include deciphering Mayan hieroglyphics and researching topics such as occultism, herbalism, and American Indian beliefs. Lynda privately published a book of poetry in 1979.



## CHAPTER 1

# LIFE ON THE FRONTIER



A legend in its own time, the American West enthralled the 19th-century world. Popular fiction, newspaper stories, Wild West shows, and paintings portrayed a mysterious, romantic West of larger-than-life heroes, dashing villains, and thrilling dangers.

The reality was both more and less than the legend. The western wilderness offered freedom and a good life. Recruiting pamphlets promised abundant land. News stories spoke of gold nuggets lying in streambeds. Thousands carved new lives for themselves in the West – a few found the vast riches and adventure they dreamed of.



In less than a century, the West changed from an enormous unknown wilderness to a settled, prosperous nation.

Lieutenant Pike's career as an explorer began in 1805, when he incorrectly identified Leech Lake, Minnesota, as the source of the Mississippi. In 1806, Pike led a party of 15 to explore near the Arkansas and Red rivers. He established an outpost near Pueblo, Colorado, then headed northwest. Pike gamely decided to scale a nearby peak. The false perspective of the flat plains misled him – several days later he seemed no closer and declared the mountain unreachable. Pike turned south to New Mexico, where Spanish officials apprehended the party for illegal entry. The Spanish escorted them through Texas, releasing them in Louisiana in July 1807.

## EXPLORATION AND TRAILBLAZING

In 1803, the French sold the 800,000-square-mile Mississippi drainage for \$15 million to the United States – the Louisiana Purchase. On May 14, 1804, President Jefferson sent Lewis and Clark’s Corps of Discovery to explore the northern Plains. Their 60-foot barge carried 30 men up the Missouri from St. Louis. Supplies included swivel cannons and Kentucky rifles, and colored beads, calico, and peace medals to give friendly Indians. Their gunpowder was stored in lead casks, which became bullets when empty.

The Missouri's sand bars and caved-in banks were treacherous. Herds of more than 10,000 buffalo blocked the way. Swarms of mosquitoes made Lewis' Newfoundland dog howl, despite his thick hair. Hostile Indians attacked them. Winter in North Dakota froze their liquor solid in 15 minutes.

A Shoshoni woman called Sacajawea, the wife of one of their guides, led them part way. They crossed the Continental Divide and bought horses from the Shoshoni when the Missouri River ended. Picking up the Columbia River, they finally sighted the Pacific in November 1805. On March 23, 1806, they returned along the Lewis and Clark Trail, reaching St. Louis on September 23. The expedition was a monumental success, and opened the way west for trade and settlement.





# THE FUR TRADE

The Western fur trade flourished from the 1810s to the 1840s, spearheading Western exploration and establishing U.S. land claims. Solitary trappers blazed trails west and trading companies followed, setting up forts and posts.

With moccasins, leggings, fringed shirt, and long hair, mountain men hunted the mountain streams and meadows. At runways and dams, they set traps below the water surface and staked them at the length of their chains. Peeled willow twigs dipped in “medicine” (beaver musk) baited the traps. Trappers collected their catch at sun-up.

A full-grown beaver weighs 30 to 60 lbs.; the prepared pelt 2 lbs. or less. Trappers usually skinned the beaver on the spot, saved the bait gland, and took the tail back to camp for dinner. The scraped pelt, stretched on a willow hoop – much like a scalp – dried in the sun for a day or two.

Mountain men were also master buffalo hunters. They found long-barreled rifles too time-consuming to load and the balls too small to kill buffalo. Instead, they charged the animals on horseback, firing and reloading their short-barreled shotguns at full gallop.

Free trappers (not employed by a fur company) ranged in small parties, usually of four or fewer. This afforded some measure of safety from the hazards of the wild: floods, snowslides, grizzlies, and hostile Indians. When the fur trade waned, many trappers became Army scouts or led emigrants westward.

## WESTWARD, HO!

“If hell lay to the west, Americans would cross heaven to get there.”

On May 19, 1841, the first wagon train of 70 pioneers and 12 wagons left Missouri. Nine years later, the gold rush brought 85,000 along the Oregon Trail. Easterners and Europeans headed west when the 1862 Homestead Act opened public lands to settlers. By the completion of the transcontinental railroad in 1869, an estimated 350,000 had gone west in their prairie schooners.

There were four main routes: the Oregon Trail, the California Trail, the Santa Fe Trail, and the Mormon Trail. The 4,000-mile Oregon Trail took six months. Some emigrants chose the 13,000-mile journey around Cape Horn.

Pioneers rose at 4:00 in the morning. They dressed, breakfasted, struck camp, yoked the animals, and were on the trail by 7:00. Women and children rode in the wagons or walked along. Hunters rode after buffalo. Scouts chose the best fords and campsites, raising flags to show the way. The party rested at noon. In late afternoon the train leader drew a circle on the ground and the wagons parked along it, encircling the camp. Buffalo chip fires cooked the evening meal and the first watch began at 8. Music and dance whiled away the evening. Once at their destination, early settlers simply cleared the land and started farming.

Communities soon allotted 640 acres, a square mile of land, to newcomers. An 1850 law cut the claim size to 320 acres per man, but allotted another 320 acres to his wife, creating a great demand for women (30,000 women went west in the 1860s).

## GOLD FEVER

On January 24, 1848, James Wilson Marshall saw a lump of yellow metal about the size of a dime at the bottom of the tailrace at Sutter's Mill (now Sacramento). It looked suspiciously like gold. He flattened it between two rocks, boiled it in lye and baking soda, and dripped nitric acid on it. It didn't change.

## FUR COMPANIES

Fewer than 10 fur companies ever made it big. The American Fur Company, Columbia Fur Company, Missouri Fur Company, Pacific Fur Company, North West Company, Hudson's Bay Company (established in 1670!), and Rocky Mountain Fur Company are the best-known. The Missouri Fur Company was the first to employ white trappers; companies previously relied on Indian trade.



## TRADING POSTS

The trading companies' winter posts varied widely in construction and permanence. The Hudson's Bay Flathead post was “a row of trading huts, six in number, low, linked together under one cover, having the appearance of deserted huts.” Bent's Fort, on the Arkansas River in Colorado, was a mud castle 137 feet by 178 feet with two 18-foot round towers.

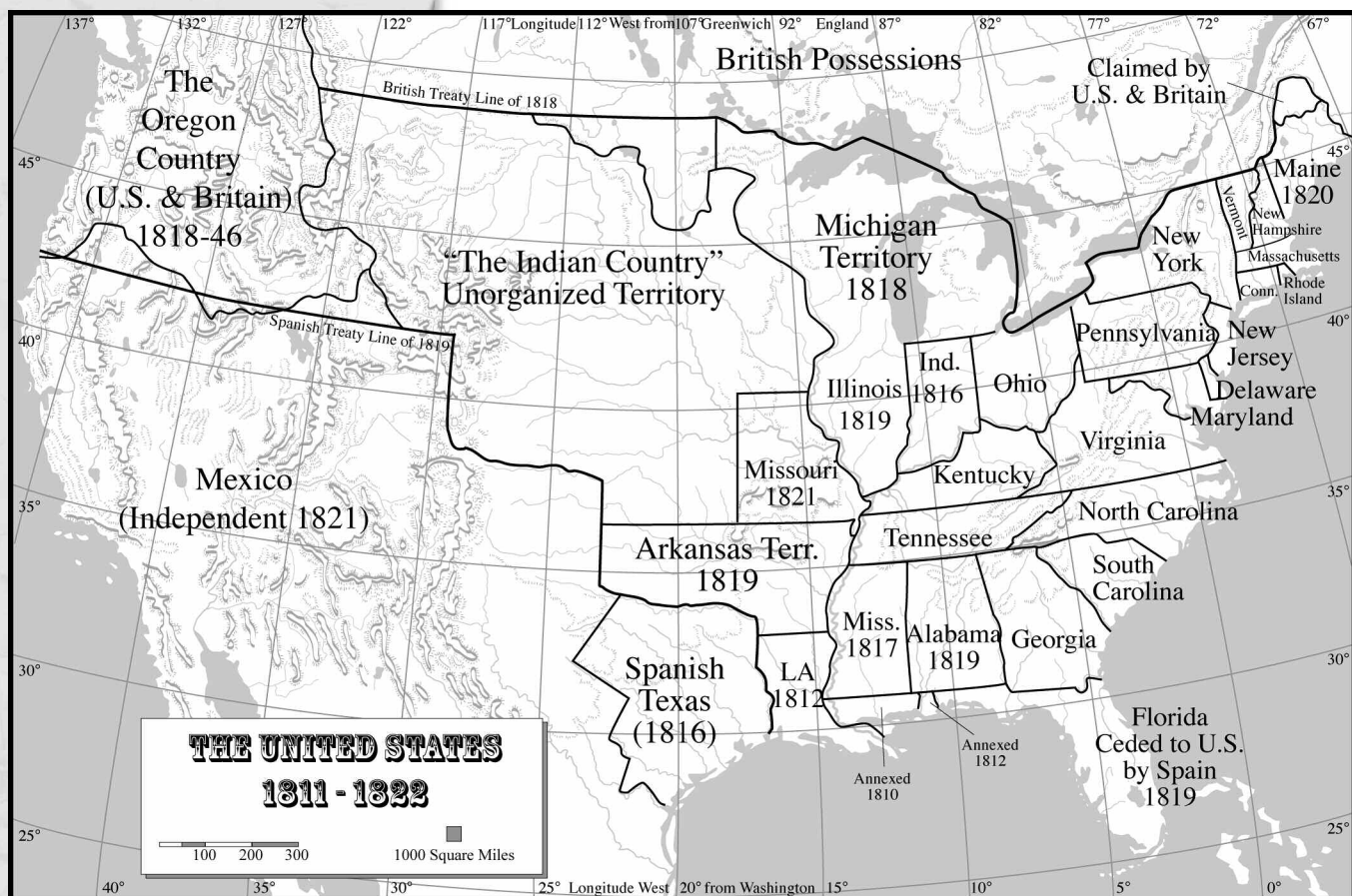
Indians traded at the fur companies' posts and forts. They put on their best clothes, paraded, and sang when presenting themselves and their goods. They brought the skins of beaver, otter, muskrat, fishers, minks, martens, foxes, and dried buffalo meat, among other things. In return, the Indians received guns and ammunition, blankets, kettles and tools, liquor, and more.

## RENDEZVOUS

*Rendezvous*, started in 1825, was the mountain men's annual summer convention. Sponsored jointly by the four St. Louis trading companies (Missouri Fur, Chouteau, North West, and Rocky Mountain), it lasted until 1840. Like most good conventions, *Rendezvous* moved each year.

Free trappers could trade with any of the companies and get about \$5 per pelt. They spent their money on goods hauled from St. Louis: gunpowder, blankets, coffee, alcohol, mail, newspapers, and all other types of supplies. They cut loose with running, jumping, wrestling, shooting, and riding contests. They ate, drank, bragged, and brawled.





## AROUND THE HORN AND ACROSS PANAMA

The 13,000-mile sea voyage around Cape Horn was a favorite route for Easterners bound for California, although it entailed six months of monstrous seas, equatorial heat, bitter cold, illness, and verminous food. With the onset of the Gold Rush, ships from everywhere abandoned their usual business to carry passengers. Old, rotten ships were hauled off mud and sandbanks, patched up, and packed off around the Cape; many never made it. Diaries record much floating wreckage along the route.

The trip through Central America was shortest and most expensive. Boats sailed from New York to the Isthmus of Panama, where small steamboats chugged 17 miles up the Chagres River. Travelers rode Bongos – native flat-bottomed boats – the remaining 75 miles of river, then plodded by mule trains through the jungle to Panama City. Dense jungle underbrush could so block the air circulation that pack animals suffocated. At Panama City, where throngs waited for ships, many gambled away their passage money.

It was gold! By May, fewer than 100 people remained in San Francisco as everyone – even the sheriff – ran for the diggings. The northern California Army lost 716 men of 1,290. Throughout 1848, California and Oregon emptied into the area. In 1849, San Francisco's population grew from 459 to 25,000. There were three routes from the East to the Sierras – overland, around Cape Horn, or through Central America (see sidebar).

The three-month overland route was the most arduous. Trains and riverboats carried prospectors halfway across the country. "Forty-niners" piled up in Missouri and Iowa, waiting for the spring. They followed the Oregon or Mormon Trails, trying to make headway before winter snows blocked the mountain passes. Cholera, mountain passes, deserts, and Indians killed many along the way.

At the goldfields, miners looked for a placer (pronounced "plasser") and staked out a claim. They dug out the most likely material, then swirled it under water to separate the sand and gravel. Fifty pans of dirt per 10-hour day was typical. Many miners teamed up and built various devices to mechanize their "panning."

Luck ruled the day, and the first one there didn't always strike it rich. During 1848, hard workers could take out \$800 to \$1,500 worth in a single day. Miners sometimes succumbed to "lump fever" and abandoned one claim for a better one.

The California rush peaked in 1852 when 100,000 miners found \$81 million in gold. With the surface gold panned out, big companies and their heavy equipment gradually took over.

In 1859, gold was found on the South Platte River in Colorado. Prospectors streamed westward and east from California. 100,000 prospectors painted their wagons with the slogan "Pike's Peak or Bust." Most of these "fifty-niners" found nothing and trailed home with the slogan changed to "Pike's Peak Be Damned!" or "Busted, by God." Within a decade, Colorado was the biggest gold producer in the United States.



## CATTLE DRIVES

When the United States won Texas, Mexican rancheros left their long-horned Andalusian cattle behind. In 1830, 100,000 head roamed free; by 1860, 3.5 million dotted southeastern Texas. Hopeful ranchers hired “cow boys” to catch and herd them. The longhorn drives from Texas to railyards north in Missouri and Kansas are the most famous. Drovers faced a number of hazards along the way. Indians farming in Indian Territory (Oklahoma) taxed herds passing through at 10 cents a head; other Indians attacked. Kansas and Missouri farmers called Grangers fenced their land and shot to keep herds out, fearing they might carry Texas fever (see p. 12). Outlaw bands called Jayhawkers demanded cattle at gunpoint. The Civil War temporarily ended the Texas cattle trade, although some stockmen supplied the Confederates.

By 1865, southwestern Texas was choked with 6 million wild cattle. Texas cattle headed north to Kansas and Missouri rail yards. New ranches in New Mexico, Colorado, Wyoming, and Montana supplied the wagon trains heading west and sent cattle east along the rails.

In 1871, the last big drive headed from Texas to Kansas. Only half the animals were sold. The rest were turned out to graze; three-quarters died during the winter. Between 1882 and 1884, the plains were seriously overgrazed; by 1884, 10 acres barely supported one animal. Droughts and severe winters from '84 through '87 killed hundreds of thousands of cattle and bankrupted the ranchers – by 1887, many stockmen had lost 90% of their herds. Most gave up; others started again.

## THE WANING OF THE WEST

By the end of the century, the West was part of the nation, rather than a frontier. Westerners were citizens, no longer pioneers. The final blows to the freedom and danger of the West fell in the late 1880s and early 1890s, with the last of the resisting Indians finally submitting to reservation life. In fact, the “classic West” had almost passed away by the 1870s – railroads and telegraphs spanned the continent, the buffalo were all but gone, and barbed wire fenced the prairies.

With the connection of the east and west coasts by 1869, passengers, goods, and information traveled cheaply and quickly from the Atlantic to the Pacific. Emigration was no longer an arduous, often deadly, six-month journey in a jolting wagon. Whole towns were built around the railroads.

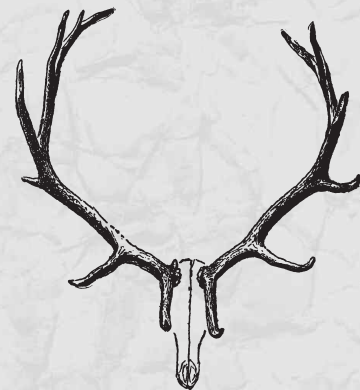
In the late 1860s and early 1870s, the buffalo had three white enemies: soldiers, who said they couldn't tame the Indians as long as their food roamed free; cattle ranchers, who wanted their herds to graze on the prairies; and European army officers, who wanted fine soft buffalo hide coats. An enormous slaughter began and bleached buffalo bones littered the prairies. Passengers shot at the buffalo from train windows. By 1885, fewer than 1,000 wild buffalo remained.

Early ranchers depended on free prairie grazing to support their large, loosely tended herds. Later ranchers preferred to claim and protect parcels of land. During the late '70s, ranchers strung barbed wire across the prairies, marking their pasture boundaries and penning their herds. Open prairie became real estate. Ranchers killed fence cutters and cattle rustlers. Blizzards in 1887 killed millions of cattle, sending cowboys looking for other work.

A few vestiges of the Old West remained at the end of the century. Butch Cassidy's Wild Bunch rampaged in the late '90s and early 1900s; cowboys rode the much tamer range; wealthy tourists flocked to dude ranches; national parks preserved some of the wilderness. But the magic was gone.

## LIFE ON THE CATTLE TRAIL

Drive teams needed one man per 100 head and included a trail boss, cook, and wrangler, as well as the hands. The cook and wagon rode ahead to prepare meals. The wrangler handled up to six horses per trail hand. The trail boss picked out the route, watering places, and bedding grounds. Lead or point riders directed the herd, swing and flank riders kept the sides from spreading out, and drag riders followed up, eating everyone's dust. Two or three thousand head per drive were common. Steers are good walkers; four-year-olds are considered best. Driving the cattle 25-30 miles per day for the first few days made them tired and tractable; 10 miles a day thereafter made good time. One animal always took the lead while the herd tended to walk in a loose V. A good lead steer was valuable and might be kept to lead other drives.



The hands let the herd graze at a walk for three to four miles in the morning, then drove them hard and broke at noon. In the afternoon, the herd grazed at a walk again as the hands nudged them into a column. At sundown, the men rode the herd into a tight circle, then rode slowly around, singing to soothe the animals (cattle seem to prefer slow mournful tunes, which may explain the origin of much country and western music). The first watch went until 10. At midnight, the cattle got up, shifted, and lay down again. Second watch lasted until 2, and the third until breakfast.

Cattle stampede at almost anything. Ducks flying up at water holes, storms, strange smells or noises, flashes of lantern light at night – not to mention Indians and rustlers – may cause a panicked run.

Drovers told time and direction by the North Star. The cook pointed the wagon tongue at it at night and the trail boss checked “tongue north” in the morning.



## THE UNFORTUNATE DONNER PARTY

In 1846, a group of families known as the Donner party set out from Illinois along the Oregon Trail for California. Their trip was trouble-ridden from the beginning. They started late in the year, argued, split up, reformed, took unproven shortcuts, and progressed much more slowly than was wise.

They ran into serious trouble in the Great Basin desert – 100 oxen died and families abandoned their wagons and supplies. Poorer party members ran out of provisions entirely. On September 30 at the Humboldt River, James Reed killed a driver in an argument. He was expelled from the party and rode for California, where he organized an expedition to bring back supplies.

By October 31, some of the party were camped at the foot of Truckee Pass (now Donner Pass), and some were 5 miles behind at Alder Creek. Blizzards would soon make travel impossible. Some families attempted the pass, but snowdrifts and a storm forced them back. Reed's rescue party turned back when their horses died in the snow. Both camps were starving. They ate the livestock, made gruel from flour, and toasted a fur rug. They seasoned boiled hides and bones with pepper. One family's dog fed five for a week.

In mid-December, 17 from Truckee Lake attempted the pass on snowshoes. They had no provisions or supplies. One man, dying of cold and hunger, urged his daughters to eat his flesh. The survivors tried to hold off, but ate roasted meat the next day. They continued, eating those who died. After a month on foot, seven lived to reach the Sacramento Valley. When rescue parties reached the camps, 13 were dead and the survivors nearly mad. Cannibalism was commonplace at Truckee Lake. Of the original 81 travelers, 47 survived.

## THE QUEST FOR STATEHOOD

Throughout the 19th century, Congress divided federal land into *territories*. Although each had its own governor, legislature, and court system, the federal government limited territorial rights. Territorial delegates to Congress could not vote, and the government reorganized territories at will.

Most people considered statehood desirable and inevitable, although some preferred the relaxed laws many territories enjoyed. To attain statehood, a territory had to meet certain requirements – especially concerning population – and establish a constitution. The location of the state capital, or even the county seat, was usually a matter of serious, long-term politicking, sometimes leading to theft, assassination, or pitched gun battles!

Ironically, the last stand of the cowboy spirit was in Hollywood, where independent film-makers had gone to escape the Edison monopoly in the East. To prevent sabotage of their cameras, they hired former cowboys to double as extras and armed guards. Some of these became actors or stuntmen; Wyatt Earp and Emmett Dalton hung around with the film-makers, trying to sell their life stories and serving as unpaid consultants; and famed lawman Bill Tilghman formed a partnership with a train robber he'd arrested to start a production company! The legend of the West (as told by the survivors) lived on.

## WESTERN SOCIETY

Life in the Old West varied wildly from location to location. One town might be a peaceful village, filled with friendly and helpful citizens. But the next city might be run by crooked lawmen and corrupt judges, with "deputies" extorting loot from all passing through. Mining tent-and-shack towns were particularly wild; some averaged a murder a day, and any man there had an estimated 4% chance of meeting a violent death within a year!

## WESTERN TOWNS

Whether its economy was based on cattle, mines, railroads, or buffalo, a typical Old West town was wide-open and wild. Businesses lined the broad Main Street – post office, hotel, general store, apothecary, bank, church, livery stable, newspaper office, barber shop, and saloons – their elaborate facades hiding the cheap construction behind. Boardwalks kept the dust and mud in the street, while wooden porch roofs provided shade. Here and there a sign advertised a doctor or a lawyer, or offered rooms for rent.

Most towns began with a saloon or two, and grew. One hundred settlers were required to form a town, buying land from the government for \$1.25 an acre. Town founders, hoping their budding community would prosper and the resale value of the land increase enormously, first arranged for a town newspaper. Editor set up their offices and printing press outside hastily erected shacks until more permanent buildings went up, and sang the praises of the growing city for the benefit of out-of-town readers.

The next important arrival was the general merchant and his "shebang" (general store). If blacksmiths and other craftsmen didn't immediately flock to the emerging boomtown, gifts of town lots encouraged them. Theaters and opera houses often sprung up before churches or schools. Towns bidding for the county seat also had to erect a courthouse and jail.

Hopeful cities were abandoned when prosperity failed to appear – if the railroad passed them by, or the mines panned out. Other hazards townsfolk faced included fire, flood, pestilence, and lawlessness.

## WOMEN IN THE WEST

White women were very much a minority in the Old West. In 1849, there were 65,000 men and 2,500 women in San Francisco, and the ratio in many towns was even worse; only Utah had roughly equal numbers of men and women. Few jobs were open to women, and some areas even prohibited them from owning land.



Prostitutes flocked to the makeshift towns where miners, hunters, and cowboys spent their money. As the towns became more permanent, some women found work as shop clerks, teachers, and milliners. Farmers wanted wives as co-workers (and for their extra allotment of land) as well as companions, and many marriages were arranged by families or by "mail-order." Few other options were offered to women, but a small number pursued more interesting careers. Some women inherited ranches, stores, newspapers, or other businesses, and ran them well. Some accompanied their husbands on cattle drives, and one ranch in Texas was run completely by women. A few women dressed as men and searched for gold, fought in wars, or joined outlaw gangs; one, Charlotte "Cockeyed Charley" Parkhurst, became a cowboy, lumberjack, and successful stagecoach driver, keeping her secret until her autopsy (she was also the first woman to vote in an election in the United States). Kitty LeRoy and "Poker Alice" Ivers achieved fame as shootists as well as gamblers. These, however, were the exception; most women in the Old West lived in drudgery, and most of their daughters left the farms to live and work in cities.

## DISASTER

Nature can be cruel, and pioneers encountered extreme temperatures and weather in the West. (See *Weather*, p. B187.) The northern Great Plains suffered winter temperatures well below freezing, while Death Valley soared above 120° in the summer. Dangerous weather included tornadoes, blizzards, high winds, and dust and sand storms. Swarms of locusts, drought, or sudden hailstorms could wipe out entire crops. Prairie fires, earthquakes, avalanches, and mudslides presented further trouble.

## STATUS AND COST OF LIVING

Status	Monthly Cost of Living
7 (President)	\$10,000
6 (Governor, senator)	\$5,000
5 (Business baron)	\$3,000
4 (Large business owner)	\$1,500
3 (Big-city mayor)	\$750
2 (Mayor, federal judge)	\$300
1 (Merchant, lawman, Military Rank 4 or 5)	\$120
0 (Average citizen, Military Rank 2 or 3)	\$60
-1 (Laborer, Military Rank 0 or 1, Outlaw)	\$30
-2 (Street beggar, Reservation Indian)	\$5
-3 (Slave)	\$0

Reduce monthly cost of living by 50% if the character's job provides room and board.





## BOOM AND BUST

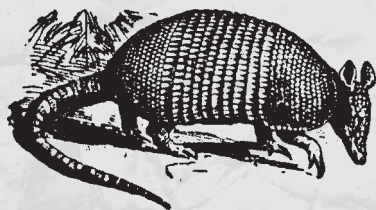
The 19th century was marked by financial instability, especially in the West. The wages given in the Job Table (p. 40) are guidelines only. In boom towns, (mining towns, railroad terminal towns, etc.), both wages and costs of living may be multiplied by 5 or more. Interest rates on loans will be as high as 25% a month. A critical success on some job rolls can mean profits or a strike worth \$10,000 or more.

In times of bust, once-thriving communities become ghost towns as citizens move on in search of jobs. Wages drop drastically as the source of wealth dries up, and prices follow.

## TAXES

Many communities had trouble raising tax money for the simple reason that residents had very little taxable property. Homesteaded land was free from taxes until the claim was finalized – usually after five years of occupation.

For game purposes, the GM may assume taxes constitute part of the normal Cost of Living. If he needs to relieve PCs of excess cash, he may have the PCs' community impose any special "emergency" taxes desired. The building of churches, schools, roads, and other civic improvements make good excuses for tax collection and fund raising. Collecting taxes was often a major part of the county sheriff's job – and as they kept a percentage, it's a part many took seriously!



## REGIONAL ACCENTS

On the frontier, with no mass media to smooth out regional accents, travelers may easily place people they meet by their manner of speaking. With a successful IQ roll, one can tell the speaker's general region of origin – Ireland, Germany, New England, the Southwest, Canada, and so on. (This is automatic if the listener has Area Knowledge of the region in question.) A listener may place an Indian's tribe of origin on a roll of IQ-2 if he knows the language the Indian is speaking and has either Area Knowledge of the tribe's territory or the Heraldry (Indian Tribes) skill.

Recognizing a faked accent requires a Contest of Skills between the IQ or appropriate Area Knowledge of the listener, and Acting of the speaker.

## Blizzards

Blizzards plagued the mountains in winter, closing passes and trapping travelers. On the plains, winter winds could pile snow in drifts 30' deep. Deep snow creates *very bad terrain* (see p. B188), making travel nearly impossible. Business came to a standstill until shovels, hard work, and horses could clear the roads.

For information on freezing to death and other effects of cold, see p. B130 and sidebar, p. B188.

## Fire

With many towns hastily constructed of wooden buildings, devastating city fires occurred throughout the century. Mining communities, with rowdy inhabitants, were particularly susceptible – San Francisco burned six times in two years.

Prairie fires were just as frightening. Lit by lightning, accident, or hunting Indians, they swept across the plains at speeds up to 20 mph. Buffalo herds stampeded (see p. 122), crushing everything in their path – not far behind were the flames themselves. Getting caught in the flames was deadly (see pp. B129-30).

## DISEASE

Disease was a frightening frontier hazard. Doctors could do little except relieve the symptoms (see the *Physician* skill, p. 35). Some epidemics affected horses and mules, crippling a region's transportation and communications for a month or more, but diseases that took human lives were most feared. Indians were particularly hard hit by European diseases, suffering more than a hundred epidemics between 1520 and 1900, or one every 4.2 years.

For general rules concerning disease, see p. B133 and pp. CII167-174.

## Cholera

Many pioneers died of cholera, also known as "Bronze John." An epidemic occurred in the Mississippi Valley in 1870-73, with a mortality rate of 50%. See p. CII169.

## Rabbit Fever

Westerners could catch *tularemia*, or "rabbit fever," by handling or eating an infected rabbit or hare. See p. CII171.

## Smallpox

The U.S. Army started inoculating against smallpox in 1777, but epidemics continued during the 19th century. Smallpox devastated many Indian tribes; a plague that hit the Mandans in 1837 left 31 survivors out of 1,600. See p. CII172.

## Texas Fever

Texas fever was a common and dreaded cattle disease in Texas, Oklahoma, and Kansas during the 19th century. It was spread by ticks, although farmers of the time blamed the longhorns. Any bovine exposed to an animal carrying infected ticks must roll against HT+4 or contract the fever. The disease attacks the red blood cells, causing anemia. The animal loses 2 ST each day. Only a critical success on a daily HT roll will allow the animal to recover.



# THE LAW OF THE WEST

The frontier attracted many interested in easy fortunes or fleeing the law. Eastern sheriffs closed cases with the notation “G.T.T.” – “Gone to Texas.” Endless opportunities for crime, coupled with inadequate law enforcement, resulted in the famous Western lawlessness. Little effort was made to solve murders; one Nevada town boasted only seven murders in 25 years, writing off the hundreds of other shootings as self-defense.

Some local peace officers were both honest and competent, but other “town-tamers” were little more than outlaws with badges, deputies, and patrons. When local officials were afraid to act, county sheriffs or Federal marshals sometimes apprehended outlaws, but arrest didn’t always lead to punishment. Few justices of the peace had a Law skill higher than 10. A Texan judge once gave a suspended sentence to a man who pleaded guilty to manslaughter, then sentenced a confessed horse thief to life imprisonment, explaining to a visitor, “Well, down here there is some men that need killin’, but there ain’t no horses that need stealin’.” (See also *Judge Roy Bean*, pp. 106-107.) Some outlaws had powerful Patrons who made judges, prosecutors, and juries nervous. It took Federal judges or honest circuit judges to make the frontier court system effective, and frontier jails were rarely strong enough to hold outlaws for long. Towns without jails chained prisoners to trees or in livery stables. Keeping court documents safe was also a problem (see *County Seat Wars*, p. 99).

When the law failed, citizens tended to take matters into their own hands. The “hemp fever” or “lead poisoning” dealt out by vigilantes was swift and sure – often more effective than the legal process. Vigilance committees held informal hearings, passed judgment, and carried out sentence within hours. Some committees had constitutions and bylaws, enforcing the law when local authorities failed. Others were mobs. Residents of Tombstone were particularly proud that five of the outlaws in the local cemetery were “hanged legally.”

## COMMUNICATION

Settlers and prospectors needed information from the East. Many travelers carried letters west with them, passing them on to other travelers until – with luck – they reached the addressee. This system was slow but surprisingly effective; most people were fanatically honest about others’ mail. Communication was even slower in the other direction.

As the West became settled, expressmen established regular mail and freight routes. Many lasted only a few years. A few endured. The transcontinental telegraph and railroad rapidly replaced them as the major delivery systems (see Chapter 3).

### The Telephone

Alexander Graham Bell patented his invention in 1876 and 1877. During the 1880s the telephone began to appear in the West. Originally a toy for the rich, it became an indispensable tool, especially for doctors and law enforcement officials. Sioux medicine man Sitting Bull learned to speak on a telephone, but was convinced that it could only convey English.

### Newspapers

Western newspapers of the 1840s rarely had large readerships. They used flowery language and satire intermixed with passionate political and social diatribes. Humor, politics, and fanciful stories made popular newspaper fare. Extravagant names were common – Oregon had *The Flumgudgeon Gazette and Bumble Bee Budget* with a readership of 12 by 1845, and also boasted the *Like It or Lump It*.

## “HOWDY, PARDNER!”

Adventuresome players can bring an Old West flavor to their characters through the liberal use of words like “pronto,” “oughtn’t,” and “ain’t.” Phrases such as “I reckon” and “nary a one” will also help. Drawin’ ’em out in a low drawl won’t hurt none, neither. Good cussin’ words include “gawddamm” and, of course, “sonuvabitch.” And don’t forget whoops of “hoo-eee!” and “yee-haw!”

For cowboy slang and other ideas, see *A Dictionary of the Old West* by Peter Watts.



## EXCERPTS FROM SAN FRANCISCO POLICE BLOTTERS

Hyppolite Boveau, a Frenchman, fired a pistol in the street and did not know any better. Discharged.

Colonel Waters of the Curbstone Rangers was picked up helpless drunk on Kearny Street and taken to the station house in a wheelbarrow. Fined \$5.

Three Frenchmen with unpronounceable names were found very noisy on Pacific Wharf and fined \$5 each.

Color Harmony – Henry White and George Brown, being very blue, went into Green Street and blacked each other’s eyes. Fined \$25 each.

John Briggs, found comfortably drunk on Long Wharf. Discharged on promise to reform.

Guadalupe Parvenise, sleeping with a friend Sunday night, abstracted \$10 from his pocket, for the purpose, he said, of preventing somebody else from taking it. Sent down for 3 months.

(Compiled from the Police Court Column of the *Daily Alta California* in 1852.)



## DANGEROUS NEWS

Western publishing could be quite dangerous. Jesse Randall, the Democratic publisher of the Georgetown, Colorado *Courier*, was forced to dodge cannon balls blasted through his front window by angry Republicans. William N. Byers, editor-publisher of the *Rocky Mountain News*, was kidnapped by outlaws when he made derogatory remarks about their favorite saloon. Cheyenne, Wyoming's Asa Shinn Mercer, who published the *Northwestern Live Stock Journal*, was jailed by the local cattle barons when he imprudently called them "the Banditti of the Plains." Kansan publisher Daniel Anthony was shot twice, beaten, and horsewhipped, but also shot and killed a rival publisher, caned another, and seriously wounded one reader. The publisher of the Ogden, Utah *Morning Rustler* was tarred and feathered. In Medicine Lodge, Kansas, due to a shortage of tar and the cost of feather beds, the subscribers of the *Barber County Mail* merely coated editor M.J. Cochran with sorghum molasses and sand burrs, then rode him out of town on a rail.

Attacks in print were also common; the publisher of Oklahoma's *Watonga Republican* once described his rival at the *Watonga Rustler* as an "ignorant, egotistical, scrawny, miserable, contemptible, disgusting, measly, mangy, depraved, lying, hypocritical, bleary-eyed, doughfaced, idiotic, dwarfed, pinched-up, quaking old numbskull." A more lasting insult was paid to journalist Julian Street by the city fathers of Cripple Creek; when he wrote an expose of the red-light area on Myers Avenue, they renamed it "Julian Street."

## THE MORMONS

In the middle of the century, religious persecution drove the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints west in search of refuge. After the church's founder, Joseph Smith, was murdered by a mob in 1844, Brigham Young led the "Mormons" across the Plains. Their destination was unknown when the journey began. In July, 1847, Brigham Young reached the valley of the Great Salt Lake and announced, "This is the place."

The 1,300-mile migration of the Mormons was brilliantly organized. Pulling the "divine handcars" with all their possessions, refugees headed West in groups of 10, 50, or 100. Those in the forefront plowed fields and planted crops, to be harvested by those who followed. Even so, many Mormons perished.

Their new home was one of the least hospitable places in the West. With discipline and a high degree of organization, the Mormons dammed rivers and built a thousand miles of canals to irrigate the desert. For a time, the faithful gained the freedom from persecution they had hoped for.

Professional reporters – war correspondents – began to appear in the early 1860s. Later reporters scoured the West for interesting news. The two leading Eastern pictorial magazines, or "illustrateds," of the day were *Harper's Weekly*, with a readership of 100,000, and the smaller *Frank Leslie's Illustrated Newspaper*. Both used illustrations to increase circulation.

## EDUCATION

State and territorial governments' public education administration included a board of education, a superintendent of schools for each county, and a board of trustees in each district. Young communities that couldn't afford a public school sometimes asked an educated towns person to teach for \$1 per pupil per month.

As soon as possible, a town erected a schoolhouse. Typically, this was a wooden building about 20 × 30 feet with a table, chair, blackboard, iron stove, benches, and a few schoolbooks. The county superintendent awarded teaching certificates to qualified candidates. Prospective teachers needed to pass an examination on 11 subjects, including teaching methods. The scarcity of teachers encouraged many superintendents to overlook candidates' shortcomings. Some schoolteachers were teenagers, often younger than some of their students.

Many frontier children received little or no education, despite the public elementary schools. (See *Literacy*, p. 30.) Private academies in the West offered educations equivalent to that of public high schools, and there were a few seminaries and colleges, but few could afford the fees.

Adult education took the form of lecture and debating societies. Members met weekly or monthly to discuss politics, philosophy, poetry, and other subjects.

## RELIGION

Many settlers came to the West in search of religious freedom. Larger denominations included the Mormons (see sidebar), Methodists, Baptists, Presbyterians, Congregationalists, Roman Catholics, Episcopalians, and Lutherans. Smaller sects included Moravians, Dunkards, Anabaptists, and Quakers.

Some families traveled 30 to 50 miles to attend services; others worshipped at home. Many communities erected a common church – each creed held services on alternating Sundays. Itinerant preachers ("circuit riders") made the rounds of neighboring communities. Ministers were usually settlers, mixing spiritual labor with farming.

## ENTERTAINMENT

Drinking, gambling, and whoring were popular pastimes in the Old West, but Westerners delighted in everything from boxing bouts to belly dancers to Shakespeare. Most cities had theaters, and traveling opera companies performed Gilbert and Sullivan and Italian operas.

Smaller communities made do with the talents of their citizens – local fiddlers, accordion players, "hoe downs," county fairs, church picnics, quilting bees, and other gatherings broke the monotony. People hoarded every bit of printed material – newspapers, magazines, books, and mail-order catalogs – for leisure reading.





## ***Saloons***

In addition to drinks, many saloons offered gambling, dancing girls, boxing, and billiards. Some saloon owners installed a stage for shows. Rowdy cowboys rode their horses into saloons, ordering drinks for their mounts or playing horse-back billiards.

## ***Cowboy Amusements***

Cowtowns furnished endless diversions after a long trail drive. Dancing, gambling, and drinking filled the nights. Many towns required cowboys to hand over their guns when arriving, but these laws were difficult to enforce, and cowboys often let off steam by “hurrahing” the town – riding up and down the main street, firing into the air (not always accurately). Despite the damage and injury, citizens grudgingly put up with these shenanigans – relieving cowboys of their hard-earned pay was good business, and trail hands were more civilized than the street gangs in larger cities back east, sometimes even paying for damages.

Cowboys on the range swapped news, told stories, sang, showed off, and gambled; poker games, horse races, cockfights, bare-knuckle boxing matches, and shooting contests were all popular excuses for betting. Annual *rodeos* (roundups) featured tests of endurance and horsemanship after the day’s work, followed by dancing. Cowboys obligingly rode broncs and wrestled steers for passing tourists.

## ***Military Pastimes***

To relieve the monotonous Army life, almost every Plains fort sported a pack of greyhounds. Officers coursed the dogs after jackrabbits, coyote, and antelope, and held buffalo hunts and turkey shoots. The officers’ club provided gambling, billiards, bowling-alleys, and dancing.

The enlisted men held dog fights. Lasso-throwing games, where contestants try to rope a running man, offered cowboys-turned-soldiers a chance to show off. A ball and a handy stick meant baseball. Horseshoe courts and dammed-up skating streams provided lazy sport, and there was always storytelling, gambling, chess, and checkers. Many soldiers visited Indian camps on their days off, poking around Indian “graveyards” or dallying with the squaws.

Everyone attended formal dances, although officers and their wives didn’t dance with the men.

## ***Entertainment at the Diggin’s***

Almost every form of miners’ entertainment involved betting: duelling, cock-fights, billiards, shooting galleries, and bowling matches. One mining camp held a traditional Mexican bull fight, complete with imported matador. An amazing amount of dancing about the improvised bullring resulted in no injury to the matador – or to the bull. The dissatisfied miners ran the matador out of the ring and set dogs on the bull. When that proved no more exciting, the crowd left in disgust. Another bullfight, between two bulls, was equally disappointing – both bulls had hauled wagons across the prairie and were quite placid.

Prize fights sponsored by miners were brutal tests of endurance rather than skill. With no scoring system, it could take hours for a contestant to win.

In winter, entire communities went sledding. Horse-drawn sleds hauled improvised toboggans and racing sleds up the mountainsides. In Black Hawk, Colorado, the favorite slide was a mile and a half long and took three minutes. And even miners fancied dancing, theaters, music, and lectures.

## **REVIVALS**

Westerners loved camp meetings. They were just like fairs, except for a higher purpose and without the livestock. Many religious folk, whether farmer, tradesman, or professional, eagerly took a day off – or a week – to attend a revival. Revivals drew their fair share of rowdies, too, and those who just wanted the free food. Hundreds typically attended a revival; some drew thousands.

A camp meeting began with a hymn led by “evangelical singers.” Attendees then “testified,” telling emotional stories of how they were saved from sin and misery. More songs, prayers, and Bible readings followed. The revivalist encouraged those who wanted to be saved to come forward – there was much crying and fainting, and perhaps some speaking in tongues. The whole thing concluded with tearful songs of thanksgiving and praise and a collection for the preacher.



## **ARMY POSTS**

In the early days of the Old West, many Army posts were isolated, temporary forts thrown up in the wilderness to protect the advancing tide of civilization. A *command* might be located in tents or makeshift houses. A *cantonment* was a more permanent post with buildings but no extensive fortifications. Most truly permanent forts were walled and well-protected.

Early forts were rarely well-constructed. Even the officers suffered poor quarters. The barracks for enlisted men were overrun with tarantulas and snakes in the Southwest and rats on the northern plains. Privies were outside. Soldiers took weekly baths in half-barrels brought into the mess hall. Later forts sported two-story houses complete with lawns for the officers. Even the enlisted men’s barracks were spruced up, with springs and mattresses for the bunks and kerosene lamps instead of candles.



## FLORA AND FAUNA

### THE CENTRAL LOWLANDS

Along the upper reaches of the Mississippi river, stands of spruce, balsam, pine, oak, hickory, and maple near rivers and lakes interrupt the prairie grasslands. Travelers may encounter moose, deer, buffalo, marten, fisher, timber wolf, wild turkey, prairie chicken, deer, skunk, fox, rabbit, or cougar.

In the central region, stands of trees punctuate the prairie grasses along river valleys and near lakes. White-tailed deer, squirrel, red fox, quail, pheasant, wild turkey, and bear are common.



Oak, pine, cypress, pecan, bay, elm, willow, magnolia, and the moss-festooned live oak grow in forests along the lower Mississippi. The traveler may find squirrel, deer, rabbit, wild turkey, quail, brown bear, panther, wolf, opossum, bobcat, woodchuck, weasel, muskrat, wild ducks, geese, or pheasant. Poisonous snakes include the water moccasin, copperhead, rattler, and coral snake – non-poisonous snakes include the king snake, black snake, blue racer, and garter snake. The water teems with turtles, frogs, lizards, conger eels, alligators, bass, pickerel, perch, sturgeon, catfish, and fresh-water mussels.

### THE GREAT PLAINS

Bluestems and other tall grasses reach a height of 6' in the northern plains. In the east and south, deep, black, fertile soil supports heavy grass cover – wheatgrass and buffalo grass grow 1' to 3' in the south. Cottonwood trees line the rivers, while junipers and pines cling to rocky outcrops. Herds of grazers – pronghorn antelope and buffalo – roam before white settlers fill the plains. In addition, the Plains abound with coyotes, prairie dogs, rabbits, badgers, and field mice. Porcupines, raccoons, squirrels, and myriad other creatures inhabit pockets of woods dotting the river valleys.

*Continued on next page . . .*

## Circuses

As early as 1815, a circus boat traveled down the Ohio River. Showboats plied the Erie Canal in the 1820s. The Spalding & Rogers circus had a gas-lit showboat – the “Floating Palace” – on the Mississippi and Ohio rivers in the 1850s. It cost \$1 just to stand on the deck and peer through the windows at the show. In the 1870s, railroads began offering half-rate Circus Day excursions.

A few days before a circus came into town, residents found colorful posters plastered up along Main Street. Pictures of enormous elephants, snarling lions, and beautiful female acrobats in pink tights promised exotic delights. In the early morning hours of circus day, a gaudy red-and-gold train rolled to a stop and discharged men and elephants who begin the work of setting up in a vacant lot.

It took two to four hours for the roustabouts, guying-out gang, and elephants to raise the Big Top. The menagerie and side show tents went up next. Local boys earned free passes carrying buckets of water for the elephants. A circus parade through the center of town advertised the first show. Crowds flocked to the midway for cotton candy and games. The circus treated the town to two or three shows in the afternoon and evening. It might stay as long as a week, but as often as not it rolled out of town late that first night.

Circus day was rarely trouble-free. Professional gamblers and thieves mixed with the crowds. Sideshow exhibits were often faked; after 1881, many traveling shows claimed to have the corpse of Billy the Kid. Local people, hating to be tricked, often protested the poetic license circus men used in their advertising. Arguments or even pitched battles between circus rabble and local rowdies were common enough in the Old West for showmen to habitually go armed. The call of “Hey, Rube!” was the circus man’s cry for his brethren to come to his assistance.

## Food

Though some Western eating houses offered “fancy groceries” for those who could afford them, and butchers sold whatever game hunters brought in, meals in the Old West were rarely elaborate. The cowboys’ standard fare was sourdough biscuits, strong black coffee, beans, well-done steak, or “son-of-a-bitch stew,” a casserole of veal and offal. “Prairie oysters” – fried bull’s testicles – were considered a real delicacy.

Army rations were notoriously bad. Army cooks received only 10 days’ training; bread and biscuits were often riddled with weevils and maggots; and epidemics of scurvy (see p. CII172) were common.

Buffalo hunters boiled the cuts from the buffalo’s hump, ate the intestines cooked or raw, roasted other pieces, and made “trapper’s butter” (a thick soup) from the marrow bones. Hunters would often compete by starting at opposite ends of a raw intestine and swallowing as much as they could before meeting near the middle.

Settlers grew watermelon, squash, onions, cabbages, carrots, and turnips as well as wheat or corn, and kept hogs, poultry, and milch cows. The meals of farmers living in sod houses were often seasoned with soil, muddy water, or vermin falling from the ceiling.

Explorers ate almost anything they could find, including their own moccasins (see *The Unfortunate Donner Party*, p. 10). One party of scientists became so tired of rice that they turned it into plaster for preserving fossils rather than eat any more.



Stage stops and railway eating houses had long communal tables, and few had menus. A journalist who complained about successive meals of beans on the stage to Tombstone was ordered to eat another plateful at gunpoint. Ordering mutton in a restaurant in cattle country was at best provocative.

## THE LAND

West of the Appalachians lie the interior lowlands, with the great rivers of the continent – the Mississippi, the Ohio, the Missouri, the Arkansas, and the Red. West of the Mississippi, the land rises through the Great Plains to the Rockies. Between the Rockies and the Pacific coast lie arid basins, plateaus, and mountain ranges. And south of it all, a low coastal plain stretches from New York City to Florida and west past New Orleans to the Mexican border.

### *The Mississippi River and the Central Lowlands*

Traveling 2,348 miles from its source in Lake Itasca in Minnesota across the interior lowlands, the Mississippi is the longest river in North America. Algonkian-speaking Indians named it the “Father of Waters” – Misi meaning “big,” and Sipi for “water.” It empties 350 billion gallons into the Gulf of Mexico every day.

The Mississippi’s northernmost reaches wind through low countryside dotted with lakes and marshes. To the south, it flows past steep limestone bluffs, gathering speed as it goes. Its curving channel forms cutoffs and swampy backwaters. Along the river’s upper reaches, temperatures range from 1° to 80° and rainfall averages 25 inches. Cold polar air sweeps through in winter. Summer may bring droughts, thunderstorms, or tornadoes.

The Ohio flows into the Mississippi. The Missouri – “Big Muddy” – adds enormous quantities of silt as well as water. The Mississippi is brown and often a mile and a half wide south of these rivers. Early rains in the Great Plains or early spring thaw runoff may flood the lower river. Most of the 40” of rain received in this central region falls in late spring and early summer. Temperatures vary from 30° to 75°.

The great Central Lowland stretches from western New York State to Central Texas, and from the Gulf of Mexico to Saskatchewan. Much of it is flat, or dotted with low, round hills, with very little rough terrain. To the south, the subtropical climate of the lower Mississippi sees 55” of rain and temperatures from 45° to 95°. Thunderstorms come in midsummer and hurricanes in late summer and early autumn. To the north lie the Great Lakes, in extensive forests and fertile land.

## THE GREAT PLAINS

Called the Great American Desert for much of the 19th century, the Great Plains roll between Canada and Mexico. This semi-arid grassland is nearly 500 miles wide. A few tree-covered mountains – the Black Hills of South Dakota and the mountains of Montana – rise 1,500 to 2,000 feet above the Plains. The Missouri, Arkansas, Red, and other rivers flow east across the Plains in broad, shallow valleys with steep sides.

Cold winters and warm summers prevail, but low precipitation, high winds, and sudden changes in temperature are the norm. Severe blizzards occur south to Texas. Most of the 20” of rain falls in the spring, with occasional violent thunderstorms and severe winds in summer. Warm, dry Chinook winds soften the winters near the Rockies and Black Hills of South Dakota.

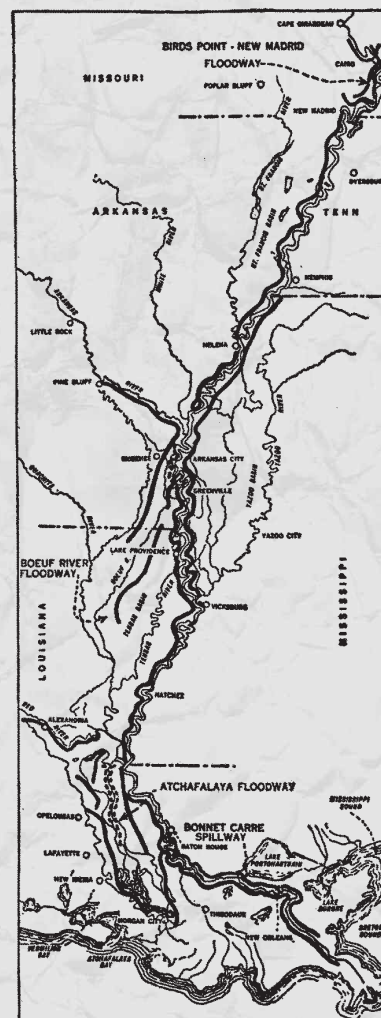
## FLORA AND FAUNA (CONTINUED)

### THE ROCKY MOUNTAINS

Buffalo grass, sagebrush, and bunch grass grow in dry areas, aspen and cottonwood at rivers. Brush begins at 6,000’: the juniper, sagebrush, scrub oak, and piñon support gray fox, skunk, raccoons, and prairie dogs. From 8,000’-10,000’, ponderosa and lodgepole pine, Douglas fir, and aspen grow. Spruce and fir flourish up to 11,500’.

The slopes from 8,000’-11,500’ supports grizzly, brown, and black bears, moose, antelope, elk, mule deer, bighorn sheep, puma, lynx, wolf, coyote, beaver, wolverine, red fox, otter, mink, marmot, porcupine, weasel, and deer mice. The golden and bald eagle, ptarmigans, osprey, water ouzel, and other birds soar among the peaks. Low-growing alpine vegetation, such as glacier lilies and over a thousand species of wildflower, sprinkle the mountain meadows.

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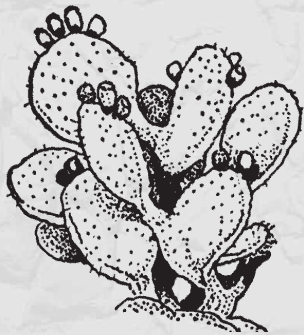


## FLORA AND FAUNA (CONTINUED)

### THE AMERICAN DESERTS

Scrub and grasses grow in the desert – the Joshua tree, sagebrush, mesquite, soapweed, iodine bush, creosote bush, cacti, saltgrass, grama, dropseed, and curly mesquite. The desert supports reptiles, numerous small birds, and migrating waterfowl. The rare desert pupfish swims in some springs.

Piñons and juniper dot the mountain foothills. Aspen, ponderosa pines, lodgepole pines, ancient bristlecone pines, and Douglas firs grow in the mountains. Animals include elk, moose, cougar, beaver, mink, marten, weasel, muskrat, badger, fox, pronghorn antelope, mustangs, mule deer, bighorn sheep, coyote, jackrabbit, rodents, and rattlesnakes. Partridge, pheasant, grouse, wild turkey, bald and golden eagle, vulture, hawk, and sea gull fly here. The mountain streams may hold bass, catfish, carp, perch, and trout. The few grassy areas in this region see occasional buffalo.



### THE PACIFIC COAST

Along the coast, thick forests climb to the timber line at around 7,000 feet: Douglas fir, ponderosa pine, Sitka spruce, hemlock, oak, cedar, maple, alder, and birch. Sagebrush and bunch grass grow in the drier areas. Deer, antelope, elk, bear, cougar, bobcat, marten, skunk, fox, coyote, small game, and game birds live here. The seas and rivers are home to sea lions, sea otters, whales, trout, sturgeon, salmon, crab, and shellfish.

The California deserts support bighorn sheep, wild burro, coyote, hare, sidewinder rattlesnake, lizards, and the huge California condor. The Central California Valley grows bunchgrass and other short grasses as well as sagebrush and shrubs. The bushes and small trees of the chaparral lie about 2,000 feet above sea level and support deer, rabbit, coyote, rattlesnakes, tortoise, and rodents. Redwoods, yellow pine, and sequoia grow in the northern forests, which support deer, bear, and cougar. Salmon, bass, trout, and shellfish splash in the rivers and ocean.

### The Rocky Mountains

The Rockies stretch from northern Canada to New Mexico, several hundred miles wide in places. Northern landscapes offer snow-capped peaks, conifer forests, wide intermontane valleys, and clear, cold streams. The Colorado ranges' colorful sedimentary rocks dominate a rugged, beautiful country. The Colorado Front Range rises abruptly from its base to rolling alpine meadows at about 11,000 feet. The mountain peaks seem like low hills above the meadows.

Temperatures range from 20° to 90° and rainfall from 10" to 40". Late spring brings rains, summer occasional hailstorms, and droughts. Winter brings blizzards and high winds.

## AMERICAN DESERTS AND PLATEAUS

True desert is confined to the Southwest and Great Basin areas. In the low-land rain shadows of the western ranges, the thin, light-colored soil supports scattered woody scrub and cactus. The desert areas receive barely 6" of rain per year and are subject to cold winters (25°) and hot summers (90°).

The Rocky Mountains on the east and the Pacific ranges on the west enclose this 600-mile-wide arid region stretching from Mexico nearly to Canada. The Colorado Plateau in the southwest holds mesas, buttes, and steplike canyons cut from colored rock – the Grand Canyon is here.

Northwest lies the Great Basin, its north-south ranges separating deep, flat valleys. Very little rain falls here, and the Great Salt Lake and most other Basin lakes are saline. The Wyoming Basin, a peninsula of the Great Plains, forms a westward corridor through the Rockies to the Great Basin.



## THE PACIFIC COAST

The Cordilleras – the mountain chains that border the Pacific coast – include the Sierra Nevada and Cascade ranges. The Sierra Nevadas' western slopes tilt toward the ocean, but the eastern escarpment is nearly two miles high. Mt. Whitney, the loftiest of the Sierras at 14,494 feet, stands near Death Valley, at 282 feet below sea level. The tan basalt of the volcanic Cascades contrasts with the white of the glacier-formed, granite Sierras.

The northern Pacific coast enjoys cool summers and mild winters, and the northwestern rain forests gradually give way to the desert of southern California. The rain forests support conifers, redwoods, and 50 other species of trees, primarily on the western slopes.

The coastal climate varies from rain forest in the north to desert in the south. The northern areas see up to 150" of rain on the western slopes, as little as 10" inland. Temperatures range from 40° to 70°. Winter brings heavy snows and summer sees dry, cyclonic coastal storms. California is rainy from October to April, and dry from May to September, with between 80" and 15" of rain falling from north to south. The coast has few natural harbors, with San Francisco Bay – one of the finest in the world – an exception. Earthquakes and forest fires are common.



# WESTERN TIMELINE

**1800** – Federal government moves from Philadelphia to Washington, D.C.

**1801** – Thomas Jefferson becomes third president.

**1802** – West Point established.

**1803** – Louisiana Purchase. Ohio becomes a state.

**1804** – Lewis and Clark begin their expedition.

**1806** – Lieutenant Zebulon Pike discovers Pike's Peak.

**1808** – Manuel Lisa establishes the Missouri Fur Company.

**1809** – James Madison becomes fourth president.

**1811** – Tecumseh defeated at Battle of Tippecanoe, Indiana. First steamboat, *New Orleans*, on the Mississippi.

**1812** – U.S. declares war on Great Britain. Louisiana becomes a state.

**1814** – War of 1812: the British burn Washington; invasion of New York fails; treaty of Ghent (December 24) ends the war.

**1815** – Andrew Jackson defeats British at New Orleans.

**1816** – Indiana becomes a state.

**1818** – James Monroe becomes fifth president. Mississippi and Illinois become states. U.S.-Canadian boundary fixed; U.S. and Britain agree to occupy Oregon Territory jointly. *Savannah* is the first steamship to cross the Atlantic (26 days).

**1819** – The first paddle-wheeler, *Independence*, on the Missouri. Financial panic grips the nation. Spain cedes Florida to the U.S. Alabama becomes a state.

**1820** – Missouri Compromise prohibits slavery north of Missouri. U.S. Land Law fixes minimum cost at \$1.25 per acre.

**1821** – Mexico achieves independence. Stephen F. Austin arrives in Texas. Santa Fe Trail opens trade with northern Mexico. Hudson's Bay Co. merges with rival North West Co. Missouri becomes a state.

**1822** – Rocky Mountain Fur Co. founded in Missouri. First fur-trapping expeditions up the Missouri to the Yellowstone.

**1823** – Monroe Doctrine closes America to further European colonization. Texas Rangers are founded.

**1824** – South Pass through the Rockies discovered by Jedediah Smith. The House elects John Quincy Adams sixth president after bungled election.

**1825** – First Rendezvous. Erie Canal opens.

**1828** – Democratic Party formed.

**1829** – Andrew Jackson becomes seventh president.

**1830** – Indian Removal Act promises land west of the Mississippi River to the Indians. First commercial railroad opens in the East.

**1832** – First emigrants travel the Oregon Trail.

**1833** – Santa Anna elected president of Mexico. San Felipe convention in Texas.

**1834** – Fort Laramie trading post (Wyoming) established by Sublette and Campbell; military post 1849-90.

**1835** – Texas Revolution begins: San Antonio besieged. Texas Rangers formally organized. Cyrus McCormick patents mechanical reaper.

**1836** – Texas Revolution ends: the Alamo and San Jacinto; Sam Houston becomes President of Texas. First white women (Narcissa Whitman and Elizabeth Spalding) travel the Oregon Trail. First Colt revolver manufactured. Arkansas becomes a state.

**1837** – Martin Van Buren becomes eighth president. The Panic of 1837 depresses the economy.

**1838** – Trail of Tears: forced Cherokee removal to Indian Territory.

**1840** – Last Rendezvous.

**1841** – Ninth president, William Henry Harrison, dies a month after inauguration. John Tyler becomes tenth president.

**1842** – Treaty with Britain settles northeastern U.S. boundary. John C. Fremont begins explorations of the West. Ether first used as anesthetic.

**1843** – Fort Bridger (Wyoming) established; military post 1858-90.

**1844** – First use of telegraph in U.S.

**1845** – James Polk becomes 11th president. Texas joins the Union; Mexico severs diplomatic relations with the U.S. 557 steamboats on Western rivers. Florida becomes a state.

**1846** – U.S. declares war on Mexico: battles of Palo Alto, Resaca da Palma, Monterey, Buena Vista; Bear Flag revolt. Oregon boundary is established by treaty with Great Britain. Nitroglycerine invented. Iowa becomes a state.

**1847** – Mexican-American War: Mexico City captured. The Mormons settle at Salt Lake City, Utah. Donner Party tragedy.

**1848** – Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo ends Mexican-American War. Discovery of gold at Sutter's Mill in California. American model locomotive introduced. Wisconsin becomes a state.

**1849** – Zachary Taylor becomes 12th president. 80,000 49ers head for California. First gold dollars minted, first hanging at gold fields, first major San Francisco fire. Elizabeth Blackwell first woman M.D. in U.S.

**1851** – Six fires devastate San Francisco.

**1850s** – Indian wars in the Northwest.

**1850s to 1890s** – Indian wars on the Great Plains; mostly over by the 1870s.

**1850** – Taylor dies of cholera; Millard Fillmore becomes 13th president. California becomes a state. Peak of westward wagon train migration. Allan Pinkerton opens detective agency. Creation of the American Express Company. First women shopkeepers.

**1851** – San Francisco vigilance committee formed. Fort Laramie Indian conference permits white travel through Indian territories. Telegraph first used to track train locations.

**1852** – Wells, Fargo & Co. established.

**1853** – Franklin Pierce becomes 14th president. Levi Strauss makes denim jeans.

**1854** – The Gadsden Purchase. Republican Party named. Kansas-Nebraska Act lets states choose to allow or prohibit slavery; War for Bleeding Kansas. Russell, Majors & Waddell freighting firm established. Mail route between San Antonio and San Diego established.

**1857** – Dred Scott decision. Descendants of slaves denied citizenship. James Buchanan becomes 15th president.

**1858** – Lincoln-Douglas debates. Butterfield Overland Mail route established. Gold discovered in Colorado and Nevada. Minnesota becomes a state.

**1859** – John Brown attacks the federal arsenal at Harpers Ferry, Virginia; arrested by Robert E. Lee. Oregon becomes a state. First oil well drilled at Titusville, Pa. First major silver strike at Comstock, Nevada. Gold strikes at South Platte River, Colorado.

**1860s to 1880s** – Indian wars in the Southwest.

**1860** – Lincoln elected 16th president; South Carolina secedes. 735 steamboats on Western rivers. First Pony Express run.

**1861** – Confederate States of America take Fort Sumter (April 12), beginning the Civil War: Battle of Bull Run. Kansas becomes a state. U.S. begins passport system. Wild Bill Hickok and Buffalo Bill Cody meet in Kansas. Telegraph service spans the country. Mark Twain pilots steamboats on the Mississippi River.



**1862** – Civil War battles: Shiloh, *Monitor* and *Merrimack*, Peninsular Campaign, Second Bull Run, Antietam, and Fredericksburg; Sibley tries to conquer the West. Congress passes Pacific Railroad Acts. Ben Holladay takes control of Central Overland, California and Pike's Peak Express Co. Homestead Act opens public lands to settlers. Minnesota Massacre.

**1863** – Emancipation Proclamation takes effect January 1st; Quantrill's gang burns Lawrence, Kansas; first national conscription; draft riots in New York City. Battle at Gettysburg; Gettysburg address. West Virginia becomes a state. Central Pacific and Union Pacific railroads break ground. Montana gold rush. Kit Carson fights the Navajo.

**1864** – Sherman's march. "In God We Trust" first appears on U.S. coins. Pullman car introduced. Sand Creek Massacre. Long Walk: Navajo removal to Bosque Redondo. Nevada becomes a state.

**1865** – 13th Amendment abolishing slavery. Lee surrenders (April 9) at Appomattox Courthouse, Virginia; war ends May 26th. Lincoln assassinated (April 14); Andrew Johnson becomes 17th president. Ku Klux Klan formed in Pulaski, Tennessee. 1,700 die in explosion of the *Sultana*, on the Mississippi.

**1866** – First Civil Rights Act. The 14th Amendment gives blacks the vote. First James gang robbery in Liberty, Missouri. Wells, Fargo & Co. buys the Butterfield Overland Mail route. Fetterman Massacre. First Winchester repeating rifle (Model 1866) invented. Dynamite invented. First burlesque show in U.S.

**1867** – Reconstruction begins. Alaska purchased from Russia for \$7.2 million. Cattle drives from Texas to Kansas begin. Buffalo population at 13 million. Gold discovered in Montana. Dominion of Canada established. Nebraska becomes a state.

**1868** – Andrew Johnson impeached. Seven Confederate states readmitted to the Union. Fort Laramie treaty establishes Great Sioux Reservation in the Black Hills. Battle of Beecher's Island, Colorado. Kit Carson dies. Custer's 7th Cavalry wipes out Cheyenne village at Washita River, killing Chief Black Kettle. Knuckle coupler invented.

**1869** – Ulysses S. Grant becomes 18th president. The Golden Spike connects the U.P. and C.P. railroads; first Wells, Fargo delivery by rail. First women's suffrage granted by Wyoming Territory.

**1870** – Joseph H. Rainey of South Carolina becomes first black U.S. Representative; Rev. Hiram R. Revels, first black U.S. Senator. Last of the four remaining Confederate states readmitted to the Union. Second Civil Rights Act. The 15th Amendment guarantees voting rights. General Robert E. Lee dies. Consolidation Locomotive introduced. First Ghost Dances.

**1871** – Chicago fire. Greatest Show on Earth opens. Wild Bill Hickok is marshal of Abilene.

**1872** – Credit Mobilier railroad scandal. Dodge City, Kansas founded. Yellowstone National Park established. Air brake invented. "Buffalo Bill" elected to Nebraska legislature.

**1873** – Financial panic develops into five-year depression, the worst to date. Colt Peacemaker pistol developed. Canadian North West Mounted Police (Mounties) formed. James Gang's first train robbery.

**1874** – Barbed wire patented by J.F. Glidden. Gold discovered in Black Hills, South Dakota.

**1875** – Silver discovered in Leadville, Colorado. Third Civil Rights Act.

**1876** – Custer's last stand at Little Bighorn. Wild Bill Hickok killed in Deadwood, South Dakota. Colorado becomes a state.

**1877** – Sitting Bull leads Sioux into Canada. Rutherford B. Hayes becomes 19th president after bungled election. Reconstruction Era officially ends. Federal troops put down railroad strikes. Chief Joseph leads Nez Percé War.

**1878** – Lincoln County War, New Mexico. Calamity Jane nurses smallpox victims in Dakotas.

**1881** – Billy the Kid killed. Gunfight at O.K. Corral, Tombstone, Arizona. Twentieth president James A. Garfield shot; succeeded by Chester A. Arthur.

**1882** – Oscar Wilde lectures on Aestheticism in Denver and Leadville, then drinks local miners under the table. Chinese Exclusion Act bars Chinese immigration for 10 years. Jesse James killed. Roy Bean becomes Justice of the Peace.

**1883** – Western buffalo population at several hundred. 600,000 cattle in Montana and Wyoming. Completion of Southern Pacific and Northern Pacific railroads. Pendleton Act establishes civil service system. Supreme Court rules portions of the 1875 Civil Rights Act invalid. Buffalo Bill's first Wild West show.

**1884** – Theodore Roosevelt begins Western Sojourn. Granville Stuart and friends begin lynching cattle rustlers.

**1885** – Grover Cleveland becomes 22nd president.

**1886** – Statue of Liberty unveiled in New York harbor. Geronimo surrenders. End of open range cattle industry. Railroad gauges standardized.

**1887** – Nearly two-thirds of Montana's cattle perish in the Great Die-Up.

**1888** – P.J. Kepplinger first uses his gambling holdout device. Kodak camera perfected.

**1889** – Oklahoma "land rush" opens all but the panhandle of Oklahoma Territory to settlers. New Year's Day, a total eclipse of the sun mostly visible in Nevada and California. Benjamin Harrison becomes 23rd President. North Dakota, South Dakota, Montana, and Washington become states.

**1890** – Resurgence of Ghost Dances. Sitting Bull killed. Wounded Knee Massacre ends Indian Wars. Gold discovered at Cripple Creek, Colorado. Sherman Anti-Trust Act. Idaho and Wyoming become states.

**1892** – Sierra Club founded by John Muir. Johnson County War. Dalton Gang wiped out in Coffeyville, Kansas.

**1893** – Financial panic begins; thousands of banks and commercial institutions fail. Grover Cleveland becomes 24th president.

**1894** – Unemployment widespread; "Coxey's Army" of the jobless marches on Washington to demand public works program.

**1896** – Utah becomes a state.

**1897** – Gold Rush in the Klondike begins. William McKinley becomes 25th president.

**1898** – Spanish-American War: Spain cedes Puerto Rico, Guam, and the Philippines for \$20 million; Cuba comes under U.S. military control. U.S. annexes Hawaii. Gold rush near Nome, Alaska.

**1899** – Butch Cassidy's Wild Bunch pulls off incredible train heists.

**1901** – First significant oil strike at Spindletop in Texas. McKinley assassinated; Theodore Roosevelt becomes 26th president. Butch Cassidy and Sundance Kid move to South America.

**1902** – Bat Masterson becomes sports-writer at *New York Morning Telegraph*.

**1909** – Cattle and sheep wars end with shepherd murders in Tensleep, Wyoming.

**1912** – Arizona and New Mexico become the last of the 48 contiguous states.

**1929** – Wyatt Earp dies.

**1937** – Emmett Dalton dies.



## CHAPTER 2

# CHARACTERS

Western fiction, perhaps more than any other genre, revels in stereotypes. Most of these have their roots in truth – there really were gruff, half-mad mountain men, dusty cowboys, noble and vicious Indian warriors, and cocky young gunslingers. Movies, TV series, and dime novels can all suggest interesting characters.





# JACKS OF ALL TRADES

In the chaos of the Old West, many people went from town to town doing whatever work would pay. Many jobs were seasonal or part-time; lawmen, for example, took a pay cut when the town was quiet. A judge might also run the general store; a bartender might be a bounty hunter; a sheriff might be the mastermind behind a gang of rustlers; a dentist might rob stagecoaches; a scientist might hunt buffalo or finance his expeditions with poker; a war hero might become a bank robber or a politician; an outlaw might become a preacher; and a wide variety of people succumbed to the lure of gold or silver and became prospectors. Wild Bill Hickok was, at various times, an army scout, a spy, a sharpshooter, a sheriff, a city marshal, a bad actor, a prospector, a gambler, and a town drunk. Wyatt Earp was a stagecoach driver, a bartender, a gambler, a buffalo hunter, a horse thief, a con man, and a deputy marshal. “Poker Alice” Ivers was a schoolmarm, railroad gambler, chicken farmer, saloon keeper, madam, and accomplished gunfighter. Billy the Kid was a “biscuit shooter”; “Butch” Cassidy received his nickname while a butcher. Players should feel free to give their characters checkered pasts, with skills acquired in a variety of jobs.

In a realistic campaign, many of the jobs listed here will not be open to women. In a cinematic or blended campaign, the GM should feel free to people his towns with as many female outlaws, gunslingers, deputies, etc., as he wants.



## CHARACTER TYPES

### Buffalo Hunters

The vast buffalo herds draw Eastern and European sportsmen to the Plains. After buffalo hides become marketable in 1871, professional hunters earn \$100 a day. They work in winter, when the hides are prime.

The hunter should have a “war bag” – a canvas sack with his personal belongings and a book or two. He should wear a coarse suit of duck cloth, a buffalo coat, and appropriate footwear and underwear for winter work. A powerful rifle is essential; a ton of powder and lead will last the season.

Animal Empathy and Squeamishness are inappropriate. Combat Reflexes and Toughness help in a stampede. Comfortable Wealth or even greater is not uncommon, especially among sportsmen.

Enterprising hunters flood the Plains at the height of the slaughter – most of them begin with a Poverty level of Struggling or Poor, but can quickly buy this off. Alcoholism and Greed are common disadvantages.

Essential skills include Guns (Rifle), Stealth, Survival (Plains), and Tracking. Animal Handling helps predict herd movements. Merchant gets top dollar, and Carousing helps the hunter spend it. Most hunters shoot while standing; those who follow fleeing herds on horseback must have Riding.

See also *Dudes and Tenderfeet*, *Mountain Men*, and *Scouts*.

### Confidence Men and Snake Oil Salesmen

Dishonest revival evangelists, circus sideshow operators, and sleight-of-hand swindlers move from town to town one step ahead of their angry victims.

Patent medicine men hawk their “snake oil” in every town. Some are honest; the most interesting are crooks. Some simply set up on a street corner. Others produce elaborate “medicine shows,” complete with musicians, dancers, and circus performers. Once a crowd gathers, the “Doctor” begins his pitch. Some medicine showmen sell a multitude of remedies; others have one general-purpose nostrum. (Only a dollar a bottle relieves every imaginable ache, pain, and ailment.)

Bad Reputation is a common disadvantage. Cowardice, Greed, and Overconfidence are conducive to good roleplaying. Voice, Appearance, Charisma, and anything that improves reaction rolls are useful. Successful con men often have Wealth as well.

Fast-Talk is necessary. Other useful skills include Acting, Bard, Merchant, and Savoir-Faire. Each confidence game requires a different skill: Forgery, Gambling, Occultism, Theology, or Sleight of Hand. Other useful skills include Running, Climbing (out of windows and other precarious spots), and, when all else fails, one or more combat skills. Snake-oil salesman often have accomplices with Pickpocket skill.

See also *Entertainers*, *Gamblers*, *People of God*, and “Soiled Doves.”



## Cowboys

Often ill-paid and always overworked, cowboys withstand bad weather, stampedes, and damp, stony beds. Despite it all, cowboys tend to be good-natured, friendly, and fun-loving.

Most cowboys own their “outfit” – saddle, bridle, lariat, personal basics, and bedroll. Clothing should include a pair of custom-made boots, a Stetson with a fancy sweatband, chaps, spurs, and leather gauntlets. Employers supply horses, although a few cowboys have their own. Many cowboys carry Bibles, Shakespeare, or dime novels for leisure moments; at night, around the campfire, they may read aloud.

A cowboy needs Animal Handling, Heraldry (Brands) (see p. 34), Lasso, Riding (Horse), and Singing (to calm the animals). Animal Empathy and Alertness help. Gun skills are mandatory – Pistol for killing rattlesnakes, putting lame horses down, or heading off a stampede; Rifle for hunting antelope and jackrabbits. Carousing and Gambling are favorite pastimes. Wealth is rare.

Any “good” cowboy has the Cowboy’s Code of Honor (see p. 31), and a Duty to his employer. Odious Personal Habits (colorful language and tobacco spitting) are common. Experienced cowboys may be Bowlegged as well (see p. C180). Some cowboys have the Social Stigma of being minorities – after 1873, one in four was black, and *vaqueros* are often Mexicans or Indians.

See also *Gunslingers*.



## Craftsmen

Blacksmiths, carpenters, and masons build the West. As “civilization” catches up with the frontier, jewelers, leather workers (saddlers and shoemakers), potters, and woodworkers come into demand. Wainwrights and wheelwrights are always welcomed. Tailors, hatters, locksmiths, and other specialists are also scarce.

Blacksmiths are essential. Most also have Animal Handling, Mechanic (Wagons), and Veterinary skills. They repair tools and vehicles, doctor horses, and shoe horses and oxen.

See also *Merchants and Businessmen*.

## Detectives

*Pinkertons* are mercenaries who work for Allan Pinkerton’s detective agency. They bring many outlaws to justice, sometimes fighting against corrupt local officials or citizens who idolize certain outlaws. Many express companies and railroads hire detectives to protect company property, solve cases, or guard valuable shipments.

Detectives benefit from Alertness and Intuition. Reputations are common. A detective’s agency may be a Patron.

Overconfidence and Stubbornness are typical disadvantages. Duties to employers and agencies are required. Enemies from past cases are likely. Agency detectives typically have Legal Enforcement Powers (10 points); they can make arrests and engage in covert investigations. Some *Pinkertons* have a Delusion that their Legal Enforcement Powers allow them to kill with relative impunity.

Essential skills include Criminology, Guns, and Streetwise. Acting, Area Knowledge, Disguise, Law, and Shadowing help.

See also *Expressmen* and *Lawmen*.

## Doctors

From 1850 on, there is roughly one doctor for every 600 Westerners. They can do little for most patients. Anesthesia is unreliable until the 1880s; bedside manner may do as much good as medicine. Female doctors could be found in some western towns after the Civil War.

There are even fewer dentists. Traveling dentists visit some small towns, pulling teeth for 25 cents apiece. Patients who need false teeth travel to the nearest dentist, who mails them the ill-fitting results two or three weeks later.

Many doctors moved West because they couldn’t make it back East, possibly due to incompetence. Even capable physicians must work from their own houses, performing surgery without proper anesthesia. Many supply their patients with patent medicines and drugs without bothering a druggist.

Good doctors have Diagnosis (p. 34), First Aid, Physician (p. 35), and Surgery, all at TL4 (pre-Civil War) or TL5, at a skill level of 15 or higher. Bad ones may have Alcoholism or an Addiction to the drugs they prescribe.

Some “Docs” are veterinarians, with appropriate skills. A few are charlatans, peddling phony medical knowledge along with their snake oil.

See also *Confidence Men and Snake Oil Salesmen* and *Drunkards*.



## Drunkards

Drunks hang around a town's authority figures, doing odd jobs and being pitifully inadequate. Staples of Western fiction include the ruined gunslinger, the guilt-ridden doctor, and the booze-sodden Indian. Occasionally they sober up just in time to save the town or the hero. And it's always possible that a drunken Indian is just shamming, infiltrating white society for his own reasons.

Advantages are rare. Common disadvantages include Alcoholism, Laziness, and Odious Personal Habits. Dead Broke or Poor, bad Reputation, and Status of -2 or -3 are appropriate. Skills, if any, are rarely used.

See also *Doctors*, *Gunslingers*, and *Indian Braves*.

## Dudes and Tenderfeet

A *tenderfoot* is naive and unused to the hardships of the Old West. A *dude* is a non-westerner who takes pride in his clothing, whether he wears the costume of his origin – deerstalker cap and monocle of the Englishman, the tall hat of the Bostonian – or dresses up in fancy “western” duds. Both are subject to hazing and rough treatment. Westerners take especially dim views of Englishmen, even if appropriately attired and not at all tenderfooted. (See *Reputation*, p. 32.)

Many dudes are tourists with enormous quantities of luggage, including dime novels and travel guides.

Gullibility plays well. Most of their skills are not very useful in the West – such as Savoir-Faire (Back East or European), European History, Area Knowledge of (Boston or London), etc. A Kodak camera is a must after 1888. Prior to that, the very wealthy bring along their own artists to record their adventures.

Odious Personal Habits such as continual small-talk may annoy stagecoach companions. Phobias of Indians, insects, snakes, or other wildlife are possible. Many dudes have the Delusion that everything in the West is just like the dime novels. A few are actually good at something useful, such as Boxing, Guns (Shotgun or Rifle) or Riding . . . much to the surprise of their would-be tormentors.

## Entertainers

The West is hungry for entertainment, and even amateurs can draw a crowd. Circus performers, opera singers, phrenologists, mesmerists, and famous actors tour the Old West. Patent-medicine shows have troupes of fire-eaters, sword swallowers, and tumblers. Saloonkeepers put on song-and-dance acts, plays, and variety shows. Circuses have marching bands, trick riders, trained animals, acrobats, and clowns. Wild West shows offer genuine Indians, trick ropers, and female gunslingers.

Bard, Dancing, Hypnotism, Musical Instrument, Performance, Poetry, and Singing are all suitable. Audiences find Acrobatics and Equestrian Acrobatics particularly thrilling. Dancing black bears are always crowd-pleasers – an animal act requires the Animal Handling skill.

Some entertainers are treated like royalty. A few are disdained by respectable citizens – notably the saloons' piano players and dancing girls.

See also *Confidence Men* and *Snake Oil Salesmen* and “Soiled Doves.”

## Explorers and Trailblazers

Explorers in the early 1800s searched for a Northwest Passage. The U.S. government sponsored expeditions to support territorial claims and establish relations with Indians. Scientific expeditions recorded topographical, geological, botanical, and zoological information.

Most expeditions will have a leader, soldiers for protection, and a guide. Expedition leaders must have either Wealth or a Patron for funding. Military Rank (level 3 or 4) is almost mandatory in government-sponsored expeditions.



Trailblazers mark out paths for mule trains and wagons. Many are solitary, living by their wit with minimal equipment. They often have the Compulsive Behavior of wanderlust, though a few encounters with grizzly bears or hostile Indians can quickly earn enough character points to buy this off.

Explorers and trailblazers need Survival skills in many different terrains – woods, desert, mountains, and waterways. They should also have Cartography, Orienteering, and weapons skills. Animal Handling helps with pack or riding animals. Some Area Knowledge of the terrain to be explored is helpful. The main idea, of course, is to increase the level of Area Knowledge tremendously in the course of the exploration.

See also *Mountain Men*, *Scouts*, and *Scientists and Engineers*.



## Expressmen

Entrepreneurs known as expressmen make their fortunes moving Eastern goods westward and Western ores eastward. Pony Express riders brave many dangers to deliver the mail. On stagecoaches and railways, express messengers guard important packages – gold shipments, payrolls, government documents, and the like.

Express companies employ division agents to look after the stock, buy supplies, hire employees, and act as station masters. Other employees include stock-buyers, messengers, drivers, blacksmiths, harness-makers, carpenters, and stock-tenders.

Absolute Direction is invaluable to any expressman. The company may be a Patron, but demands a Duty.

Essential skills include Area Knowledge, Riding, and Teamster. Weapon skills protect the expressman and his packages.

See also *Detectives*.

## Gamblers

Professional gamblers – including some women – ride the riverboats and the railroad, and every settlement has at least one cardsharp. Of the 2,000 or more riverboat gamblers, it was estimated that about four were honest, relying only on skill and card sense; most others had partners to help them cheat.

A good gambler could win \$100,000 a year, but his expenses included kickbacks to the riverboat captain, train conductor, or saloon keeper.

A well-equipped gambler has at least one deck of cards (possibly marked), dice (often shaved or loaded), and perhaps a holdout device. He should have a wooden card press to store the uncoated paper cards. If he plays faro, a faro cue box – similar to an abacus – keeps track of cards in play.

A bad Reputation is common, although some well-known gamblers have romantic Reputations (see p. 30). Charisma and other reaction-bonus advantages are useful. Allies may be essential. Gambling is the primary skill. Acting supplies a poker face; Detect Lies helps identify bluffs. Sleight of Hand and Holdout are useful for cheating. Gun skills may be necessary if caught.

Some gamblers have the Compulsive Behavior of betting on anything – dog fights, horse races, boxing matches, or almost any random event.

See also *Confidence Men* and *Snake Oil Salesmen*.

## Gunslingers

Members of the brotherhood of the gun must have exceptional skills and be willing to gamble with their lives. Professional gunslingers call themselves “shootists”; others call them “man-killers.” They ride shotgun on stagecoaches or fight in range wars. Some kill out of anger; some for the thrill of testing their skills and reflexes against any and all comers. Not all are westerners; Billy the Kid was born in New York, while Hickok, the Earps, the Mastersons, and many other shootists came from Illinois.

The primary skill is Guns (see p. 33) – usually pistols, although a few prefer rifles. Fast-Draw is essential for showdowns. Bard is useful for creative bragging and helps

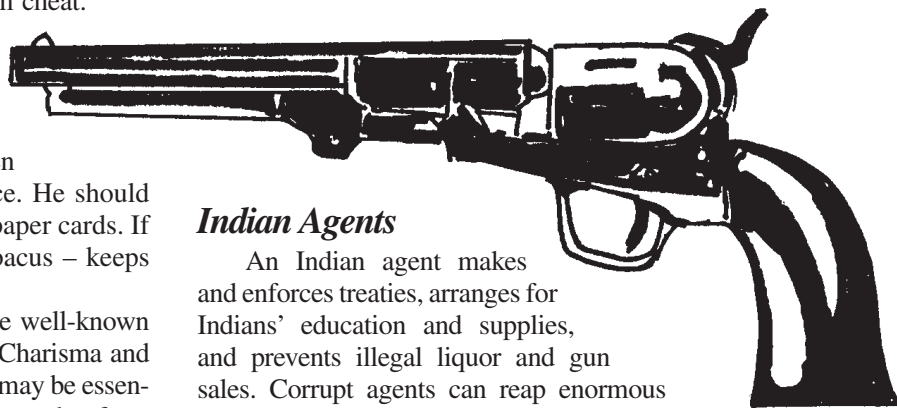
enhance a Reputation; Intimidation stops some fights before they begin. Speed-Load comes in handy during shoot-outs. Sharpshooter is appropriate in cinematic campaigns. Combat Reflexes and Danger Sense make a long career more likely.

Troublemaking gunslingers often have the Bad Temper, Bloodlust, Bully, and Alcoholism disadvantages. Many have high Carousing skills. Gambling is a favorite pastime, and may become the excuse for a good gunfight. Peacekeeping gunslingers usually have Honesty and Code of Honor (Code of the West; see p. 31). Glory Hound, Compulsive Lying, and Youth are common; Age isn't.

Any gunslinger worth the name has a Reputation as a fast gun – a reaction bonus from anyone who recognizes him. (See *Reputation*, p. 30). Gunslinging Lawmen have positive Reputations among law-abiding citizens and negative Reputations with outlaws. Gunslinging troublemakers may have negative Reputations with everyone except the readers of the dime novels Back East.

Gunslingers always have Enemies (see p. 31). These annoying young bloods, hoping to try their skill, crop up as long as the shootist has a Reputation as a fast gun.

See also *Cowboys*, *Entertainers*, *Lawmen*, and *Outlaws*.



## Indian Agents

An Indian agent makes and enforces treaties, arranges for Indians' education and supplies, and prevents illegal liquor and gun sales. Corrupt agents can reap enormous profits by selling the Indians' cattle, land, and trade goods (see sidebar, p. 96). They may sell trade concessions to whites and weapons to the Indians.

Agents who don't know an Indian language appoint an interpreter, usually an Indian or half-breed. Agents also hire blacksmiths, farmers, teachers, and mechanics to help “civilize” the Indians.

Language Talent is invaluable. Charisma and a Reputation for being fair will help earn the Indians' trust. Most agents have Honesty and a Sense of Duty to the Indians. Pacifism is appropriate as well. Corrupt agents have Greed and a Wealth of Comfortable or greater.

Administration and Fast-Talk are essential. Detect Lies, Diplomacy, and fluency in various Indian languages aid in negotiations; Politics helps gain and keep government appointments. Many agents are Quakers, with the Theology skill.

## Indian Braves

Indian warriors work best as player characters in campaigns where most or all the PCs are Indians.



A brave on the warpath has weapons, a lasso, emergency rations (dried meat or pemmican), tailored skin clothing, and a robe for cold or rainy weather. Personal items carried everywhere include medicine bundles (see sidebar, p. 70), war paint, and a fire-drill for lighting fires.

High Pain Threshold is common, and any fighting man's advantage is appropriate. Good disadvantages include Overconfidence, Berserk, and Code of Honor. A few ceremoniously take a Vow to never retreat in combat (Great Vow, -15 points). Survival skills, combat skills with the tribe's weapons, and Area Knowledge of the tribe's territory are required. In peacetime, warriors provide for the tribe with hunting skills such as Tracking and Traps.

See Chapter 4 for more information.

For Indians living among white men, see *Cowboys*, *Drunkards*, *Laborers*, and *Scouts*.

## Indian Police

Many Indian tribes have their own lawmen – known to their fellow tribesmen as “Metal Breasts,” because of their badges – who sometimes leave the reservations to retrieve Indian lawbreakers. These lawmen can aid local, territorial, or federal lawmen, and can arrest an Indian of their own tribe, but they have no Legal Enforcement Powers under white law unless deputized.

Indian police guard reservations against rustlers and trespassers and report any likely trouble among the Indians to the Indian agent. Wages are \$8 a month for officers, \$5 for privates, with full rations, badges, uniforms, and guns provided. The agents have a hard time finding any men willing to work for such wages, and the chiefs object to the idea of young men arresting their elders.

Indian police have Legal Enforcement Powers for 5 points (see p. 29); jurisdiction is restricted to the reservation or the tribe. They often have a Poverty level of Struggling or Poor, and may have the Primitive disadvantage. Common skills include Area Knowledge (Reservation), Guns, Law, and Riding.

See also *Indian Braves* and *Lawmen*.

## Laborers

Anyone with little or no skill may find a job as a laborer. Roustabouts work as deck hands along the rivers, miners dig and shovel for the big mine owners, and rust-eaters lay the railroad tracks. Skilled laborers include bullwhackers who drive the bull teams, lumberjacks who log in the Pacific Northwest, and liverymen.

Laborers typically have the Odious Personal Habit of using very foul language. A Poverty level of Struggling or Poor is common. High ST is necessary in intensive manual labor; high DX is useful when dealing with dangerous machinery.

See also *Prospectors*.

## Lawmen

Peace enforcers include town marshals, county sheriffs, territorial or state rangers, federal marshals and their deputies, and local or federal judges. Most are appointed to office; in some areas, town marshals and county sheriffs are elected. A few fill

more than one position – town marshal *and* county deputy, for instance. Salaries are usually low, but much of a lawman's income may come from fees: the Cochise County sheriff's job was worth \$30,000+ a year. Hickok received \$150 a month as Marshal of Abilene (three times the usual wage), plus a percentage of all fines and 50 cents for every stray dog he shot.



Federal marshals are usually lawyers; investigations and arrests are left up to their deputies. Deputies receive \$2 for every prisoner brought back alive, plus an allowance of 6 cents for every mile traveled and 10 cents for every mile after he caught the man (no fees or allowances are paid for dead prisoners).

Towns usually have a town marshal with an assistant marshal, or a county sheriff and one or more deputies. Local lawmen are often gamblers, gunslingers, merchants, or professionals, supplementing their income with another job. Sheriffs and town marshals can “deputize” ordinary citizens, temporarily granting Legal Enforcement Powers. Both county sheriffs and federal marshals can call out the posse. See *Ally*, p. 29.

Many local judges are untrained (see *Judge Roy Bean*, pp. 106-107). Federal judges, however, are appointed by the President (see *Hanging Judge Parker*, p. 108).

Legal Enforcement Powers are required, generally for 10 points (see p. 29). Duty is also required. Strong Reputations (as advantages, disadvantages, or both) are common, as is a Status level of 1 or 2. Politics skill may be needed to get the job, Administration or Accounting to keep it, Leadership to call together a posse. Combat skills are encouraged but not restricted to Guns – fists, saps or bullwhips can also subdue criminals – and Diplomacy, Fast-Talk or Intimidation can resolve some situations peacefully. Honesty, a Code of Honor, and Law skill are optional extras.

See also *Detectives*, *Gunslingers*, and *Indian Police*.



## Medicine Men

The Indian medicine man specializes in magic and herbalism. He cures illness, blesses, and tells the future. A medicine man is rarely suited to white men's adventures – mysterious and spiritual reasons underlie his actions.

The Guardian Spirit advantage is necessary. Voice, Charisma, Autotrance, and Empathy are useful. High Social Status is common, although some tribal medicine men face Social Stigmas within their tribes. Epilepsy, Addiction (to hallucinogens), and Split Personality can be interesting. In a campaign where magic works, Ritual Magic (Native American) is the most important skill (see p. C1144); First Aid and Physician at TL2 are also required. Most medicine men have Acting, Bard, Fast-Talk, Theology, and Dancing. Animal Guise and Symbol Drawing may be needed for some rituals. In campaigns where Indian magic works, medicine men need to be Herbalists, Dreamers, or Shamans (see *Indian Magic*, pp. 67-79).

## Merchants and Businessmen

Shopkeepers, hotelkeepers, and other businessmen are the lifeblood of every town. Some business owners are women, often assisted by inherited Wealth. Wives may manage the business if their husbands are incapacitated by shootings or other occupational mishaps.

A good idea, a small investment, and a lot of hard work can turn an entrepreneur into a successful businessman. Those who make the most from the gold rushes, for instance, are those who supply the miners' needs – entertainers, expressmen, and, of course, the saloon owners.

After the Civil War, traveling salesmen, or “drummers,” peddle almost anything. Many work for Eastern industrial concerns. Others represent mail-order firms, taking orders from their catalogs and arranging for delivery. Most specialize in one type of merchandise – ladies' lingerie, firearms, barbed wire, pre-ground eyeglasses, whiskey, and so on. Most of them believe in the quality of their merchandise – even patent medicine salesmen. See *Confidence Men and Snake Oil Salesmen* for those who don't.

Successful businessmen should have Wealth and Social Status. Fast-Talk and Merchant skills are invaluable. Small businessmen need Accounting; big businessmen hire bookkeepers.

See also *Craftsmen* and *Professionals*.

## Mountain Men

Mountain men are the deep-woods hunters, fur trappers, and scouts. They know the West from the Great Plains of Colorado and Wyoming to the Pacific Northwest. After the fur trade dies down, many guide immigrants West.

Combat Reflexes, Danger Sense, High Pain Threshold, and Immunity to Disease are useful. Language Talent and Indian Sign Language (see p. 35) are invaluable. Wealth is possible, though profits are usually squandered in a few weeks of high living, or eaten up by debts to the trading companies.

Odious Personal Habits are common but relatively unimportant in the wilderness. Phobia (Crowds) and Overconfidence are common. Encounters with wildlife or Indians may lead to physical disabilities – One Eye, Lamé, etc. Some mountain men have Dependents, usually Indian wives and possibly children.

Every mountain man is skilled in Tracking, Traps, and Survival (Mountain and Forest). Other outdoor skills, weapons skills, and animal skills are applicable. Area Knowledge of the region is invaluable. Social skills are rare.

See also *Explorers and Trailblazers* and *Scouts*.

## Outlaws

Cattle rustlers, horse thieves, bandits, and robbers are just some of the Western criminals. Outlaws may operate individually or terrorize a region in gangs.

Successful outlaws quickly gain Reputations – and not always bad ones! Alcoholism, Bad Temper, Bloodlust, Callous, Compulsive Lying, Greed, Overconfidence, Sadism and Youth are common. Compulsive Spending may give a reputation as a “Robin Hood.” Outlaws notorious enough to have a reward put on their heads will have Outlaws' Enemies (see p. 32). Gang members may have the Outlaw's Code of Honor (see p. 31). Forgery, Lockpicking and Demolition/TL5 are possible skills, though most outlaws simply use Guns and Intimidation to pull off holdups.

See also *Gunslingers*.

## People of God

Christianizing the Indians is a popular goal for missionaries in the first half-century. Many people, notably Mormons, move West to escape religious persecution. Protestant evangelists hold camp meetings and preach on street corners. A few revivalists are con men taking advantage of the religious fervor of the times.

Religion welcomes exceptional women. Early Protestant missionaries generally travel as couples, the wives as zealous as their husbands. Many women sermonize on Temperance at revival meetings.

Some minorities have their own churches, clergy, and revivals. Religious minorities easily recognized by dress or speech – the Mormons and Mennonites, for example – often face distrust and persecution.

Theology is the primary skill. Catholic priests and Protestant ministers may have Clerical Investment, but it's not required for preachers, revivalists, or Mormon elders. Anyone with Clerical Investment may also have the Church as a Patron (see pp. B24-25); Duty to the Church is mandatory. Fanaticism and Vows are common disadvantages, as are Sense of Duty and Honesty. Intolerance of alcohol, laziness, or other religions is usual. Social Stigma applies to religious minorities, especially the polygamous Mormons. Revivalists need Acting, Bard, and Fast-Talk.

See also *Pioneers and Homesteaders* and, for unscrupulous revivalists, *Confidence Men and Snake Oil Salesmen*.

## Pioneers and Homesteaders

Many pioneers are farmers, determined to make a new life but often unprepared for the wilderness. The journey is hazardous, and reaching the destination doesn't necessarily mean the end of hardship.

Agronomy (farming) and animal skills are necessary. Pioneers crossing the wilderness will find Survival skills helpful but typically inadequate. Homesteaders supplement their agricultural labors with hunting; a high Tracking skill may mean the difference between life and death before the first harvest.



Not all speak English, though most are literate in their own language.

Some settlers have the Social Stigma of being minorities – many Irish settled in the Dakotas; many Chinese traveled eastward from the Pacific; and thousands of “Exodusters,” (former slaves) moved to Kansas, Colorado, and Oklahoma to become farmers and found their own towns.

Many new immigrants have the Delusion that the West provides bountiful harvests and quick riches for little toil, fostered by the pioneer “manuals,” popular tales, and newspaper stories of the gold rushes. The journey should earn enough character points to buy this off.

See also *Craftsmen, Laborers, People of God, and Prospectors*.

## Professionals

In a Western town, most leading citizens are professionals – doctors, lawyers, teachers, bankers, accountants, veterinarians. Other professionals include butchers, bakers, barbers, photographers, telegraph operators, dentists, and newspaper editors. On the riverboats, the pilot and captain are highly respected.

Many professionals have Wealth of Comfortable or more. A good Reputation helps (see p. 30). Lawyers often have bad reputations, although a small-town lawyer who can draw up wills and deeds and help a man in trouble with the law is usually respected.

See also *Doctors, Merchants and Businessmen, and Scientists and Engineers*.

## Prospectors

Some miners dig with little equipment and less expertise; others labor in the mines for big mining companies.

Any Wealth level is possible, and subject to change. Intuition and Luck help when choosing a claim site. Common disadvantages include Odious Personal Habits and Greed. The Prospecting skill is extremely useful, although panning for gold in the first rush of each strike usually involves more luck than skill. Weapon skills let a prospector protect his claim. Lone prospectors should have Survival (Mountain) and animal skills. Mechanic (Mining Equipment) and Engineer/TL5 (Mining) are important skills in the big mines.

See also *Laborers, Pioneers and Homesteaders, Scientists and Engineers, and Soldiers*.

## Scientists and Engineers

In 1838, the U.S. Army established a Corp of Topographical Engineers that systematically surveyed and mapped the West. In 1860, their findings were consolidated into a monumental map which encompassed the entire trans-Mississippi region to the Pacific – the first dependable map of the West. Surveyors in the 1860s and '70s continued to analyze and catalog the West's geology, topology, flora, and fauna. They located and assayed most of its minerals, staked out its arable sections, and completely surveyed the area. The railroads hired surveyors to choose the routes, and every new town needed someone to survey the town lots.

Many explorers are scientists, collecting facts about natural history, anthropology, and geology. Naturalists are drawn to the forests and mountains of the Pacific Northwest.

Engineers and scientists are rare and highly respected. Comfortable Wealth and Status of 1+ are common. The Naturalist skill is prevalent. A few who study the Indians can be considered Anthropologists. Engineers may specialize in Mining, Vehicles (Locomotives), Combat Engineering, or Guns. Prospecting, Geology, and Metallurgy are useful in the mines, and growing cities need architects. Many scientists use Artist and Writing skills to record their findings. Scientist/explorers may be pacifists (like Ferdinand “Man Who Picks Up Stones While Running” Hayden), or equip their students with rifles, revolvers, and bowie knives.

See also *Explorers and Trailblazers, Professionals, and Prospectors*.

## Scouts

Prudent pioneers hire guides, and the Army employs scouts familiar with the country and Indian ways. Most of these are former fur trappers and mountain men. They have wilderness skills, know the best trails, and can discover the location, strengths, and intentions of potential enemies.

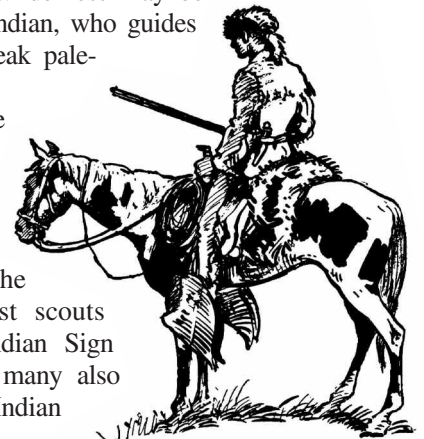
Indian scouts are employees – sometimes respected, sometimes despised – of exploring parties, military units, or merchant companies. They are experts on local geography, customs, and survival. Warriors from small tribes may see scouting as an opportunity for revenge against tribal enemies. Individuals or small parties lost in the wilderness may be “adopted” by a friendly Indian, who guides and provides until the weak pale-faces get to safety.

A good scout or guide needs high Survival skills. Weapon skills, First Aid, and Tracking are useful, as are all Outdoor skills. Area Knowledge of the region is essential. Most scouts know Gesture or the Indian Sign Language (see p. 35) – many also know the predominant Indian language of the region.

Guides are notorious for Odious Personal Habits, Alcoholism, and Compulsive Behavior such as Gambling. Physical disadvantages are rare, except for One Eye and other such “minor” inconveniences. Absolute Direction, Alertness, and any advantage which helps Sense rolls are useful, as are Animal Empathy, Combat Reflexes, and Danger Sense.

Any scout, regardless of race or gender, may have both regional Enemies and Allies. An Indian scout may have the enmity of members of his own tribe who resent his serving whites. Mountain men may have previously cultivated an individual Indian – or an entire tribe – as an Ally. The GM may require the Unusual Background advantage to explain a white scout's proficiency in Indian ways (see p. 34).

See also *Explorers and Trailblazers, Indian Braves, Mountain Men, and Soldiers*.





## “Soiled Doves”

Dance hall girls, barmaids, and prostitutes – “soiled doves,” “horizontal singers,” “girls of the line,” “fancy women,” “ladies of the evening,” “pretty waiter girls,” and so on – abound in the Old West, ranging in social status from the “Mattress Girls” who trekked west from New Orleans carrying their own bedding, to the “ladies” of Denver and San Francisco’s more genteel (and expensive) bordellos. Some also worked as seamstresses, darning mens’ clothes and replacing buttons for a fee; some did little more than dance and flirt with cowboys to persuade them to buy drinks.

Appearance can range from Beautiful (Etta Place, Frisco Sue) to Ugly (Calamity Jane). Although prostitution is legal in most towns, Honesty is rare. Addiction (Opium), Alcoholism, Social Disease, and Youth are unfortunately common. Wealth is rare, except for the few who become madams, as is Age. Some have Dependents. Reputations may be good (with customers) or bad (with the “upstanding” citizens). Many men react to French, Mexican, Chinese, and other “exotic” women at +1 or +2.

Dancing, Musical Instrument, and Singing let a pretty wait-er girl entertain as well as serve customers. Acting and Sex Appeal get the men interested; Pickpocket and Holdout relieve them of their valuables once they’re drunk. Combat skills may help against dangerous drunks and unwanted advances; pepper-boxes, stingy pistols, and knives are the most popular weapons.

Prostitutes often have nicknames – such as “Little Lost Chicken,” “Galloping Cow,” or “the Roaring Gimlet” – which count as Quirks.

See also *Confidence Men and Snake Oil Salesmen* and *Entertainers*.

## Soldiers

Frontier soldiers build roads and bridges, repair telegraph lines, fill water barrels, and muck out stables. The cavalry offers fame and glory, but most soldiers see little.

Enlistment is for five years, with room, board, and clothing provided. Wages are poor, and soldiers wait up to six months for their pay. Regulations require a weekly bath – if water is available. Daily drills are practically nonexistent, despite Army policy. A few officers actually train and drill their men – Guns (Rifle) and Spear for infantry; Guns (Rifle and Pistol), Fencing or Shortsword, and Riding (Horse) for cavalry.

Cavalry recruits must be between 5’5” and 5’10” tall and weigh not more 150 lbs. Every soldier must buy the Military Rank advantage (see p. 30) and the Duty disadvantage. Officers have one level of Social Status for every three levels of Military Rank – rounded to the nearest number – at no extra point cost. Only raw recruits lack the Heraldry (Military) skill (see p. 34).

Soldiers may share their troop’s or regiment’s Reputation – for bravery, or for lack of training or discipline. Alcoholism is common (4% of soldiers were hospitalized for it in the 1880s), and morphine addiction was frequent enough after the Civil War that it became known as “the soldiers’ disease.” Some soldiers suffer from social stigma; one in five is Irish, one in 12 is English. Some new recruits are Illiterate; many new immigrants joined the Army to receive a free education in English.

See also *Gunslingers*, *Indian Braves*, and *Scouts*.



# ADVANTAGES, DISADVANTAGES, AND SKILLS

Many of the standard *GURPS* advantages, disadvantages, and skills have special twists in an *Old West* campaign.

## ADVANTAGES

**Ally; Ally Group; Ally Group**  
(Unwilling)

see pp. B23-24, CII19-20

Many Western heroes have sidekicks – the Lone Ranger has Tonto, for example. These companions are Allies, usually of a lower point value than the character, with a frequency of appearance of Almost All the Time. Sheriffs and marshals who have full-time deputies built on more than 75 points should pay points for them as Allies. Sidekicks are most often found in adventures with only one player character.

Federal marshals, sheriffs, deputy sheriffs, and mayors can call out the *posse comitatus*, or “power of the county,” commanding the assistance of all males between 18 and 50. These should be paid for as an Ally Group (sometimes an unwilling one), appearing quite rarely.



## Legal Enforcement Powers

see p. B21

Town marshals have Legal Enforcement Powers within town limits. County sheriffs have jurisdiction throughout the county. Federal marshals and their deputies only deal with federal crimes. Most lawmen can deputize citizens, temporarily granting Legal Enforcement Powers.

In territory that expects honest lawmen, Legal Enforcement Powers cost 5 points – the marshal or sheriff and his deputies may arrest criminals and hold them for trial. Legal Enforcement Powers in wilder communities cost 10 points – citizens tend to ignore violations of suspects’ civil rights, and some sheriffs are expected to kill with impunity.

Federal marshals and territorial or state Rangers generally have Legal Enforcement Powers worth 10 points, which include permission to engage in covert investigations. Private law agencies, such as Pinkerton’s, can usually grant Legal Enforcement Powers worth 5 or 10 points to their agents.





The “civilized” Indian Tribes have their own lawmen with Legal Enforcement Powers worth 5 points. Their jurisdiction extends only to other Indians of the same tribe or on the reservation.

## Literacy

*see p. B21*

In the Old West, many people can read – at least enough for saloon signs and probably well enough for the Bible. Literacy costs 0 points for all white men and for any minority characters with Status higher than 1. Most Indians and Blacks must purchase Literacy for 10 points if they wish to be literate. Chinese and Mexicans of Status 0 or higher may be literate in Mandarin or Spanish for no point cost.

## Military Rank

*see p. B22*

Military Rank is complicated, with four kinds of officer ranks – Regular Army, United States Volunteers, Militia, and brevet – and many officers entitled to two or three ranks at once.

Rank 8: Generals and Lieutenant Generals

Rank 7: Major Generals and Brigadier Generals

Rank 6: Colonels

Rank 5: Lieutenant Colonels

Rank 4: Majors and Captains

Rank 3: First and Second Lieutenants

Rank 2: NCOs including sergeant majors, quartermaster sergeants, ordnance sergeants, and first sergeants

Rank 1: NCOs including sergeants and corporals

Rank 0: Enlisted men

Regular Army (RA) ranks rarely extend above Rank 6 – the few Generals in the army stay in the East.

During the Mexican and Civil Wars, members of the United States Volunteers (USV) may rise to Rank 8. After each war, the Volunteer units are disbanded.

Militia units may be called into service for Indian campaigns, anti-riot duty, or natural disasters – rank is granted by the state governor.

Characters pay full cost for their primary, active rank. This reflects the duties, pay, and privileges of their current rank in active service. A U.S. Cavalry officer’s active rank will be in the Regular Army; a militia captain’s active rank will be in the Militia.

In addition, soldiers or ex-soldiers may retain rank from previous service as a “courtesy rank,” for a point cost of 1 per level of rank. This is for social situations only – it entitles the holder to a fancier title. Some military men have the Quirk of insisting on being addressed by their courtesy rank (usually an old USV rank), regardless of their active rank.

Brevet ranks are awarded for valor and combat achievements. Contrary to the description on p. B22, brevet ranks in the Old West are not temporary. They rarely increase pay or duties, and are usually for social situations only. A brevet rank costs 2 points for each level above the character’s active rank.

For example, Custer’s active rank at the time of Little Bighorn was Lieutenant Colonel, RA, for 25 points. He also retained his Civil War rank of Major General, USV (a courtesy rank for a total of 7 points), and a brevet rank of Major General (for 2 points per level above his RA rank). Total point cost is 34.

In the U.S. Army, “civilized” Indians and half-breeds educated among white men may become commissioned officers. Blacks rarely attain a Rank higher than 2 until well after the Civil War. Chinese don’t enlist – they wouldn’t survive barracks prejudice.

Navies active in the Old West include the Texas Navy (see sidebar, p. 92) and the Mexican Navy. French, Spanish, and British ships are active in the early part of the century. The U.S. Navy sails in California and in the Gulf of Mexico during the latter half.

## Patron

*see p. B24*

There are many potential patrons in the Old West. Railroad barons fund sales agents; Allan Pinkerton supports his agents; the biggest businessman in town might “own” the sheriff. In *The Wild, Wild West*, U.S. Secret Service agents James West and Artemus Gordon have a “rich uncle” (Sam).

## Reputation

*see p. B17*

*Gamblers:* Honest (or dapper) gamblers may gain Reputations as dashing and romantic figures. As long as they’re not suspected of cheating, they elicit a +2 reaction from everyone who recognizes them as a gambler. 5 points (Sometimes recognized) or 10 points (Always recognized).

*Gunslingers:* Anyone with a Reputation as a fast gun gets a +1 or better reaction bonus. Further Reputations (good or bad) are encouraged – as an honest lawman, for instance, or for killing a man because he snored. (See also *Gunslingers’ Enemies*, p. 31.) 1 or more points, depending on frequency of recognition.

*Lawmen:* Lawmen with Reputations for honesty get a +2 reaction from law-abiding citizens within their territory, and from any honest fellow lawmen. Reputations for corruption gain a +2 reaction from outlaws within the lawman’s jurisdiction. Either reputation affects a large class of people; the lawman is always recognized in his own territory. 5 points.

*Professionals:* Reputations for honesty and competence are invaluable to those seeking political office or simply wishing to attract business. Typical Reputations gain a +2 reaction from townsfolk. 2 or 5 points, depending on size of town.

*Soiled Doves:* Individual prostitutes may gain positive reaction bonuses from potential customers. Exotic foreign women are considered desirable. Reaction bonuses of up to +4 are possible, but rarely apply to more than a small class of people. 1 or more points.

## Unusual Background

*see p. B23*

A white with high levels of Indian skills may have the Unusual Background “Raised among Indians” (10 points). For a white with both Indian and “civilized” skills – such as Photography and Writing – the GM may require 15 points for an Unusual Background such as “Adopted by an Indian tribe as an adult.” In a campaign where Indian magic works, white users of Indian magic should have the Unusual Background “Raised by Medicine Man” or “Taught by Guardian Spirit” (25 points), in addition to the cost of his level of medicine (pp. 71-73). Others with Unusual Backgrounds include European nobility, professional women, and well-educated blacks or Indians.



## NEW ADVANTAGE

### Guardian Spirit

5 points

Indian characters may acquire a Guardian Spirit through a vision quest (see pp. 67-68) or be approached by a spirit directly. This gives Status +1 to a warrior and Clerical Investment to a medicine man. See *Indian Magic*, pp. 67-79.

## DISADVANTAGES

### Addiction

see p. B30

Common addictions in the Old West include opium, morphine, and tobacco. The following point values are adjusted to 19th-century prices and include the +5 modifier due to legality of the available drugs.

If each daily dose costs less than \$1 per day: 0 points.

If each daily dose costs \$1 to \$5 per day: -5 points.

If each daily dose costs over \$5 per day or is otherwise difficult to obtain: -15 points.

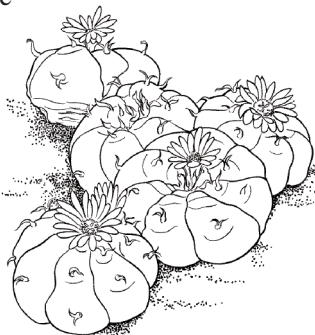
The bonuses for the incapacitating and addictive qualities of each drug remain unchanged from p. B30.

*Tobacco* is the most common Old West addiction. Many cowboys chew tobacco or roll their own cigarettes, drummers hand out “two-fer-a-nickel” cigars to their customers, Indians use tobacco both for pleasure and for religious rites. It is cheap and highly addictive. -5 points.

*Opium* is fairly inexpensive throughout the century and sold by doctors, druggists, grocers, and mail-order houses. It is usually taken in patent medicines, such as Mrs. Winslow’s Soothing Syrup, or as laudanum (opium in alcohol). Chinese prefer to smoke opium. The drug is highly addictive (-5 on withdrawal roll). Users may develop tolerance to opium, drastically increasing the daily dose required. Most users spend less than \$1 per day (-5 points). Habitual users may have an opium addiction for -10 points (daily dose costs \$1-\$5 per day). The addiction is worth -20 points for heavy users with high tolerance. Any addict who openly uses opium for pleasure rather than for medical reasons may take an Odious Personal Habit – Opium Abuse – for -5 points.

*Morphine*, a derivative of opium, becomes common during and after the Civil War. Many soldiers, given morphine for pain, become addicted (“the soldiers’ disease”). It may be injected or taken as patent medicine. Morphine is totally addictive (-10 on withdrawal rolls), but otherwise similar to opium. -10, -15, or -25 points.

*Peyote*, a desert mushroom, is used in some Indian ceremonies. It is hallucinogenic but not physically addictive (no penalty to withdrawal rolls). Some Indians have a peyote habit. Collection of peyote is time-consuming, making it difficult to obtain. -25 points.



### Alcoholism

see p. B30

Alcoholism is by far the most common addiction in the Old West. -15 points, -20 if prohibition is in force (sale of alcohol was forbidden on military posts in 1881; Kansas became dry in 1880; and in many areas, it was illegal to sell liquor to Indians).

### Code of Honor

see p. B31

The Old West has its own ideals of honor. Most of these will be more common in a cinematic or blended campaign.

*Code of the West*: Always avenge an insult. Protect the honor of all women, even Soiled Doves. Never shoot anyone in the back. Never draw on an unarmed man. -10 points.

*Cowboy’s Code of Honor*: A man’s word is his bond. Never abandon a friend. The end of a noose awaits any horse thief. Welcome all visitors with food and/or tobacco. Never borrow another man’s horse without his permission (rarely given). A dismounted man doesn’t grab the bridle of a mounted man’s horse (it’s an insult to interfere with the rider’s control). -10 points.

*Gentleman’s Code of Honor*: As per p. B31. It’s expected of Southern aristocrats and Mexican nobles. -10 points.

*Outlaws’ Code of Honor*: See Pirate’s Code of Honor, p. B31. -5 points.

*Warrior’s Code of Honor*: Many Indian Warrior Societies have a specific Code of Honor or Vow which all members of the society follow. Examples include: The best death is an honorable one in battle; the bravest act is to count coup on a live enemy; it is more honorable to kill with a lance or a club than from a distance with a gun or bow; rescue wounded comrades. The player and the GM may decide specific details of an individual warrior’s Code of Honor. -10, -15, or -20 points.

### Delusion

see p. B32

Superstitions are common Delusions in the Old West. Mild superstitions are merely quirks, such as a lucky charm or fear of black cats. Superstitions which affect the character’s behavior may be worth -5 points – believing that coiling a horsehair rope around the bedroll will stop a rattlesnake, for instance. Potentially deadly beliefs, such as “Ghost Dance shirts can stop bullets,” are worth -10 points or more.

The GM may decide that a certain superstition is actually true, much to the surprise of the disbelievers. This is particularly likely in a campaign where Indian magic works.

### Enemies

see pp. B39-40

These types of enemies are staples of Western fiction:

*Gunslingers’ Enemies*: Anyone with a Reputation as a fast gun attracts challengers hoping to make a name for themselves. These are single above-average individuals, worth -5 points. They appear on a roll of 6 or less if the Reputation is worth 5 points or less (Enemy disadvantage of -3 points). A Reputation worth 6-10 points provokes a challenge on a 9 or less (Enemy for -5 points). A Reputation worth more than 10 points earns an Enemy for -10 points, with young hotheads challenging on a roll of 12 or less. When checking for Enemies, the GM may substitute another gunslinger, of the same point value as the character, whenever a 3 or 4 is rolled. This disadvantage may not be bought off unless the Reputation is also.



*Outlaws' Enemies:* A character who is Wanted Dead or Alive effectively has an Enemy (All lawmen and bounty hunters, -30) who appears quite often (double listed value), modified by frequency of recognition. Even some of his supposed friends may be tempted to turn him in if the reward is sufficiently large; treat as an Unknown Enemy (p. CI77).

Characters with a reward on their heads need not be guilty of a crime; rewards were offered for Jesus Christ and Salman Rushdie. Even resembling a Wanted outlaw can be dangerous; treat as Mistaken Identity (p. CI78). See *Bounties*, p. 37.

## Illiteracy

see p. B33

The “default” condition for this period is literacy. However, the disadvantage of Illiteracy is common, and worth -10 points. It will be normal among Indians, slaves, and Chinese workers, and common among poor immigrants in general.

An illiterate cowhand may still take the Heraldry or Forgery skills for cattle brands (see p. 34). He knows what all the letters look like, but isn't able to form words from them.

In an all-Indian campaign, Illiteracy is not a disadvantage; it will be the universal condition. If the campaign has contact with white men, Literacy may be allowed as a 10-point advantage.

## Odious Personal Habit

see p. B26

The Old West is a rough-and-tumble place, and what “civilization” thinks of as crude is often considered normal on the frontier. When assessing a habit's value, the GM should consider the company the character will keep. An Odious Personal Habit is worth points only if it affects many people the PC is likely to meet, or if roleplaying the habit is likely to affect the other players. Colorful swearing for a cowboy is only a Quirk, a -5-point habit for a merchant, and -15 points for a Mormon elder or a schoolmarm.

## Physical Deformities

variable

The following physical disadvantages are relatively common in the Old West, but are worth only a few points in game terms: Bowlegged (p. CI80), Missing Digit (p. CI82), and Scalped (p. CI84). Missing hands, arms, and legs are common among Civil War veterans.



## Primitive

see p. B26

Most Indians are from a culture with a lower tech level than that of the campaign. Tech level in the Old West increases from TL4 in the first half of the century to TL5 after the Civil War. Most Indian tribes are at TL2; their TL1 culture has blended with settlers' technology. Each level of difference in TL is worth -5 points for the Primitive disadvantage.

Primitive characters cannot learn Mental skills having to do with technology above their normal Tech Level until they buy off the disadvantage. Physical skills, including weaponry, can be

learned at no penalty if a teacher is found. Thus, Indians with the Primitive disadvantage (usually for -10 or -15 points) often have Guns skills, using weapons bought or stolen from the white men, but are unable to learn the Armoury/TL4 or TL5 skill, to repair these weapons.

## Reputation

see p. B17

The following are sample Old West Reputations.

*Confidence Men:* Con men build unwanted Reputations as crooks. Anyone recognizing a con man reacts at -4, but good con men are seldom recognized. The trick is to get out of town before the Reputation catches up or someone exposes the scam. -10 points.

*Drunkards:* Bums, beggars, and drunkards – or anyone who looks like one – have a Reputation for being lazy and good for nothing. Almost everyone they meet reacts at -2 or worse; a very few take pity and try to help. -10 points.

*Dudes and Tenderfeet:* Easterners and foreigners have a Bad Reputation for being unsuited to hardship and easy to fool. This is usually a -1 reaction, affecting a large class of people. Englishmen elicit a -2 reaction. A successful night of Carousing counteracts these reaction penalties. -2 points or -5 points.

*Gamblers:* Some well-dressed gamblers may be mistaken for Dudes; this can be used to advantage when turning the tables on fellow gamblers. Cheating is a more common Reputation. This may take the form of two Reputations – a -2 reaction from most citizens, and a -4 from other gamblers. -2 and -5 points.

*Lawmen:* A corrupt lawman may provoke a -2 reaction from all honest citizens. Most lawmen have Bad Reputations among outlaws. “Always gets his man” elicits a -4 reaction from anyone on the wrong side of the law. A lawman is always recognized in his own territory. -5 or -10 points.

*Outlaws:* Most outlaws eventually gain Reputations as killers, for being ruthless, and so on. Law-abiding citizens react at -4. People *suspected* of crimes receive the full -4 reaction modifier whenever recognized (-10 points) and may also acquire Outlaws' Enemies (see p. 32).

*Soiled Doves:* Women known to sell their favors provoke a -2 reaction from most upstanding citizens, at least in public (-5 points). Their customers' wives react at -4 (-6 points).

## Secret

see p. B27

Many Westerners have secrets – often the reason they came West in the first place. Apart from faked qualifications and shady pasts, they may be concealing their ancestry (Custer's favorite scout, Will Comstock, was embarrassed to admit that he was the grandnephew of *Last of the Mohicans* author James Fenimore Cooper) or even their gender!

## Social Stigma

see p. B27

Minorities suffer a Social Stigma. These reaction modifiers apply in areas with substantial concentrations of the minority group. Where minorities are less familiar, the penalty is halved (round up).

*Blacks, Chinese, and Half-breeds:* -2 on all reaction rolls – except from others of their “ilk,” who react at +2. -10 points.



**Indians:** A “tame” Indian has a -2 reaction from all but other Indians. A “wild” Indian gets a -4 reaction from all except his own tribe, who have a +4, and members of allied tribes, who apply a -2. -10 or -15 points.

**Irishmen:** -1 from all non-Catholic whites. -5 points.

**Mexicans:** -1 from all Anglos and most minority members; -3 from Texans near the Mexican border. -10 points.

**Mormons:** The Mormons are persecuted by Protestants for polygamy, and widely suspected of operating murder squads, the “Danites” or Destroying Angels. “Gentiles,” as Mormons call other Christians, react at -3. -15 points.

**Women:** In social situations, men react protectively and differentially, with a +1 on the reaction roll. In business, military, and political situations, men react to their opinions and their presence at -2. -5 points.

## SKILLS

Technological skills have their standard default for white men. Most Indians and some Chinese have the Primitive disadvantage (see p. 32), and cannot use higher-TL equipment without training.



### Animal Handling

*see p. B46*

This skill is vital in the Old West. Specialization is required. Animal Handling skills default to one another based on similarities of animal types. A cowboy with Animal Handling (Horses) has default skills of Mules and Burros at -2, and Cattle or Dogs at -4.

### Area Knowledge

*see p. B62*

This may be familiarity with a specific trail, railway, river, or road, or more general knowledge of a region. Cowboys, stagecoach drivers, Pony Express riders, and railroaders should have Area Knowledge for the paths they repeatedly follow. This includes familiarity with watering stops, distance between settlements, and hostile Indians. Mountain men, explorers, and scouts may have a more general Area Knowledge of a large region, including major landmarks, large rivers and mountains, and tribes in the area.

### Black Powder Weapons

*see p. B51*

Muskets and muzzle-loading pistols and rifles are used throughout the first two-thirds of the century and extensively during the Civil War. Many Indian tribes have them, although shot and powder are hard to come by.

For more information, see Chapter 5.



## Diagnosis/TL2, 4, or 5

*see p. B56*

Indian medicine men have Diagnosis at TL2 – they view illness as spiritual activity and magic. Frontier doctors have Diagnosis at TL4 – they listen to heart and lungs, check pulse, and examine eyes, ears, nose, mouth, and bodily excretions. The Diagnosis skill at TL5 allows stethoscopes, clinical thermometers, exploratory syringes, and other instruments. See also the Physician skill, p. 35.

## Forensics/TL5

*see p. B61*

Forensics did not become a recognized science until after the West was tamed, but doctors, detectives, and lawmen may use it at default level. The first legal case using fingerprint evidence occurred in 1879 in Tokyo, and was documented in 1880, though the first case in the U.S. wasn't until 1911. Blood groups and the first test to tell human blood from animal blood were discovered in 1901. The idea that any bullet could be matched to a gun by rifling marks was introduced in 1889; previous ballistic evidence had consisted of matching wadding to papers found in the suspect's possession, or matching hand-made bullets to moulds. Doctors performing a post-mortem exam should be able to determine cause of death, make rough estimates of time of death, come to some conclusions about any weapons used (caliber of bullet and range from which it was fired, size and shape of a blade or blunt instrument) and possibly the attacker (height, strength, handedness). Getting a judge and jury (or lynch mob) to listen may require a separate skill.

## Forgery/TL5

*see p. B65*

Paper money was not widely trusted in the Old West, but forged documents could still be useful. Characters taking the Forgery skill may choose to specialize in Brands.

When illegally trying to alter a brand, use a Quick Contest of the character's Forgery (Brands) skill against the Heraldry (Brands) skill of the designer of the original brand. (Assume a skill of 12 if unknown.) Forging brands was usually done with a running iron; some rustlers made brands specifically to alter other brands (a semicircle to turn a “Rocking” into a “Circle,” for example), but being caught with either type after 1870 was considered proof of cattle theft, often a lynching offense.

## Guns/TL5

*see p. B51*

This covers any cartridge-type gunpowder weapon, where a single package combines powder and shot. All normal modifiers for missile-weapon fire apply.

In the Old West, individual weapons vary enough in handling and shot placement to warrant adjustments to the Familiarity rules (see p. B43). A character will be familiar with his own weapons, for no modifier to his Guns skills. Other weapons of the same *model* are at a -2 penalty, until the user has spent eight hours of practice shooting to familiarize himself with the individual quirks of the weapon. Other weapons of the same *type* are fired at -3 (e.g., a Smith & Wesson revolver when you're used to a Colt). Weapons in poor repair or of an unfamiliar type are at the usual -4 penalty.

See Chapter 5.

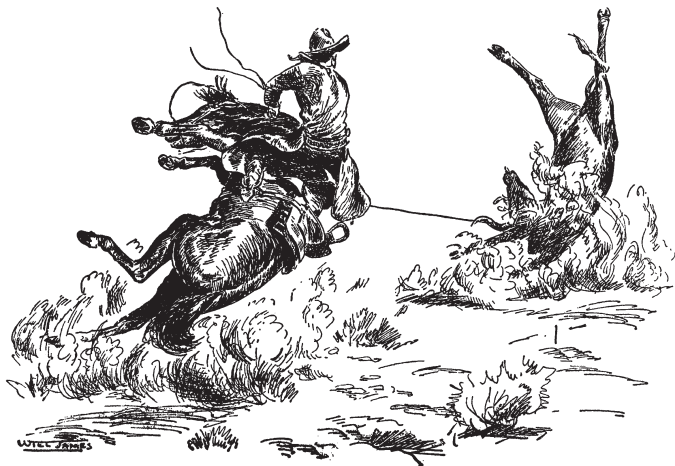


## Heraldry

see p. B58

Characters taking the Heraldry skill in the Old West must specialize in Brands, Indian Tribes, or Military Heraldry. These are separate skills with no default to each other.

On a successful Heraldry (Brands) roll, a cowhand can recognize the owner of livestock by the brand and/or ear-mark. The skill roll is modified if the design is well known (up to +5), rare (-1), or from far away (up to -5). The cowhand may add +1 to his skill roll if successful in an appropriate Area Knowledge check.



Branding an animal requires a DX+2 roll. Failure indicates a blurred brand; critical failure results in a deep burn which will become infected. Drawing a brand with a running iron (no pre-formed brand) is at -2.

When illegally trying to alter a brand, use a Quick Contest of the rustler's Heraldry skill against the skill of the designer of the original brand. (Assume a skill of 12 if unknown.) Brands must be registered in the office of the county. In legal changes of ownership, the seller adds his vend brand and the buyer puts his own brand on.

In addition to brands, marks are sometimes cut in beeves' ears. Ear-marks make identification easier if the brand is obscured. It also makes it more difficult for rustlers to alter the brand (+4 to designer's skill). Horses are often branded as well, but rarely ear-marked.

With Heraldry (Indian Tribes), a character can recognize an Indian's tribe by clothing and decoration. The Indian's Social Status within the tribe may also be determined by the feathers, beads, or other distinguishing decorations displayed. The prominence or obscurity of the tribe modifies the skill roll.

Heraldry (Military) includes the recognition of military insignia – indicating rank, corps, and company – and military bugle calls.

## Language

see p. B54

Most Indian languages are Mental/Average, though Navajo is Mental/Hard. Many Indian tribes communicated with each other in Comanche or the Plains sign language; a few speak English, and individuals in southwest tribes may also speak some Spanish (a useful second language for cowboys).

## Lasso (Lariat)

see p. B51

The skill description on p. B51 covers the standard overhead swing. Many other types of rope catches exist.

It takes two hands to handle a lariat; one creates and throws the loop, the other keeps the rope from tangling. DX-based skills such as Riding are at -2 while using a lasso.

Readying a lasso takes 2 turns on the first throw; 10 turns after a missed throw. All range modifiers apply.

Normal Lasso failures usually result in a miscast loop, with no effect on the target, or only one foot caught when either *forefooting* or *heeling* (see below). Critical failure may cause damage to the animal, a snapped rope, or a lost finger or thumb.

After a successful throw from horseback, the roper may roll against his Riding skill. Success substitutes the horse's ST for the rider's in any Quick Contest of ST with the target animal. Critical failure results in an accident for horse or rider.

Texas cowboys typically use short ropes – 30 feet or less – and ride right up to a target before casting the loop. They tie the end of the rope to the saddle horn, and are known as “tie-fast” men. This is necessary in brush country, where the rider needs a hand free to protect his face from whipping branches. With the rope tied, a critical failure in the Quick Contest of ST causes a fallen mount, snapped rope, or ruined saddle.

Cowboys in California and Oregon use longer ropes – up to 100 feet – and often make catches at fantastic distances. They're known as “dally” men, for looping the rope around the saddle horn. This allows some “give” when a running steer hits the end of the line, resulting in fewer snapped ropes. In an emergency – such as a fallen cowpony – the dallied rope can be turned loose quickly, minimizing damage to horse and rider, while a tied rope has to be cut.

*Overhead swing:* When roping animals, the overhead swing is typically done from horseback. Horns or neck are the usual targets. Roll a Quick Contest of ST between the roper and the target – the roped animal is at ST-5. If the lassoeer wins, the victim is immobilized; if he loses, he loses the rope. -2 to Lasso skill.

*Forefooting catch:* Performed from horseback, the roper starts with a horizontal loop above his head. While the roper rides alongside the target, he turns the loop over the running animal's shoulders. The loop catches both forelegs, throwing the animal. When an unmounted man forefoots an animal, the throw is an underhand one, called a *mangana*. The animal is allowed a DX roll at -4 to remain standing. -3 to skill.

*Heeling catch:* Used to rope stock by the hind feet to throw and hold them, or to down an animal already roped by the head but not thrown. The mounted roper rotates the loop in a vertical circle and slips it under the moving animal to catch both hind feet. -4 to animal's DX roll to remain standing. -3 to skill.

*Neck buster:* A variation of the overhead swing. As soon as the loop settles around the animal's horns or neck, the roper flips the rope to one side of the animal's body and cuts his horse sharply away to the other. The animal is allowed a DX roll at -4 to remain standing, with a penalty of -8 if running when caught. On a failed DX roll, the animal somersaults and lands facing the opposite direction. A HT roll is required for the animal; critical failure results in a broken neck. -3 to skill.



*Peal*: An impressive throw which takes its name from the Spanish word meaning “sock.” It catches the animal by the hind feet, each foot in one loop of a figure eight. -4 to animal’s DX roll to remain standing. -6 to skill.

### **Physician/TL2, 4, or 5**

*see p. B56*

Indian medicine men may have the Physician skill at TL2. This includes the ability to find healing herbs in the wild. Frontier doctors may have the Physician skill at TL4, but cannot find useful drugs in the wild unless they have Naturalist at 20 or better. During and after the Civil War, most doctors have the Physician skill at TL5, though a few “old-fashioned” physicians still practice on the frontier. There is no licensing or control of physicians for most of the century.

The Physician skill at TL4 includes bloodletting, blistering, and administering drugs to induce vomiting, diarrhea, and perspiration. In realistic campaigns, critical failure of the Physician skill usually results in the patient’s death.

Mid-19th-century Americans begin to patronize homeopaths and hydropaths to escape the dangers of conventional medicine. Conventional doctors prescribe changes in ventilation, diet, bathing, and even politics or religion, to supplement drugs and surgery.

Ether is available to frontier doctors in 1847. By 1848, nitrous oxide and chloroform join it. Anesthesia is used for only the most major surgery until the 1880s. Before 1870, infection is misunderstood and surgery often results in death. Later, surgery to reposition and wire together shattered bones begins to replace immediate amputation as the preferred treatment.

Office practice in large towns and cities begins in mid-century. By 1900, it’s as important as house calls, although country doctors still visit patients in rural areas. Throughout the century, surgeons call as well, operating in private homes when moving the patient is too dangerous. Most hospitals aren’t reliable until after the Civil War, and are widely regarded as a place to go to die.

See also the Diagnosis skill, p. 33.

### **Riding (Horse)**

*see p. B46*

This includes grooming, caring for, and saddling. Riding bareback is at -2 unless the rider initially learned to ride bareback. Spanish and Indian riders mount from the right side of the horse, Americans mount from the left. (This makes a difference when placing weapon sheaths and other items, and can confuse stolen horses.)

### **Sign Language**

*see p. B55*

Plains Indians use sign language to overcome the profusion of Indian languages and dialects. Most Indians from the Great Plains know the standardized gestures, and many trappers and scouts learn as well. When two people try to sign, and one or both has a skill level of 10 or less, the GM may want a roll to see if the idea comes across. Roll against the poorer language skill plus 1/5 of the better signer’s skill (round down). For hurried gestures, distance, or complex ideas, roll with a -2 to -8 penalty.

### **Tracking**

*see p. B57*

Experienced trackers can read the type of animal, estimated number, speed, direction, and age of tracks. Such information may be crucial. As an example, Indian tracks which include furrows among the hoof prints signify a group on the move with their women and belongings – the furrows are made by horse and dog travois – and not a party of young braves.

### **Traps/TL5**

*see p. B68*

This skill covers everything from rabbit snares to camouflaged pits. It includes knowledge of the proper baits, and the animal’s habits and habitats. Familiarity rules apply (see p. B43), penalizing attempts to take unfamiliar prey.

Roll when setting the trap. Failure requires resetting. Critical failure injures the trapper. Time required depends on the type of trap; rabbit snares take 15 minutes, buffalo pits require three hours. Manufactured spring traps take five minutes.

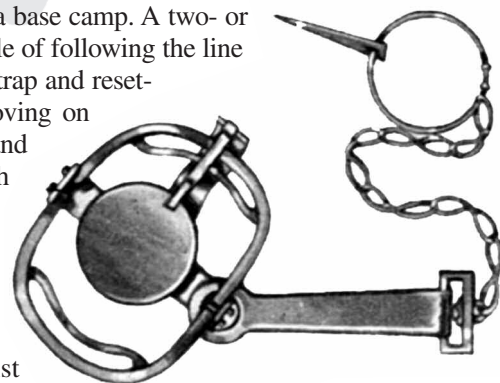
Muskrat, mink, and beaver traps are set underwater. Trappers looking for beaver generally set the traps at sunset and check for catches the next day at dawn. Some trappers set a string of traps in a wide loop, starting and ending near a base camp. A two- or three-day schedule of following the line – checking each trap and resetting it before moving on to the next – and camping out each night is common. The trapper moves on when the area is trapped out.

Roll against the Trap skill once per day for each trap. Where game is scarce, the GM may increase the interval between rolls. A success means an animal is caught; a critical success means a fine specimen, of triple value. A critical failure means that the trap caught something unwanted, such as a skunk; that the animal is still alive, and must be dispatched; or that the animal escaped – perhaps taking the trap with it, or leaving a paw behind.

If the trapper has an Area Knowledge of 15 or higher in the area, add +1 to the skill roll. Manufactured traps, as opposed to home made or improvised, add +2.

Metal spring traps may be dangerous to domestic animals and humans, causing crushing damage. A rabbit or mink trap can cause 1d-4 damage – enough to break a finger or a toe. Beaver traps cause 1d damage. Wolf traps cause 2d damage. Bear traps inflict 3d+2 damage. Pits inflict falling damage. Traps and snares made out of natural items normally won’t harm a human, though a large deadfall does 1d+1 crushing damage.

Humans may make a Quick Contest of their IQ versus the trapper’s skill to avoid a trap. Traps and snares set on land rarely kill the animal outright; suffocation, bleeding, thirst, predators, or the trapper finish them off.





# MONEY

Standard starting wealth in the Old West should be about \$200. GMs may adjust this to fit the campaign. In mining towns during the gold rushes, starting wealth may be \$1,000 – but cost of living (see sidebar, p. 11) and most prices will be five times higher, as well.

## SILVER, GOLD, AND PAPER

For most of the 19th century, there was no central banking system; each state and every bank issued its own paper money. Banks rarely redeemed other banks' notes for full value – the farther the issuer, the greater the discount. By the end of the Civil War, favorable foreign exchange rates bled the east of gold and silver. Civilians had only “greenback” paper dollars and “shin plasters” (notes for 3, 5, 10, 25, and 50 cents). In 1875, the treasury finally had enough coins to redeem them – but Confederate notes were utterly worthless.

### Coins

Out West, short-lived banks and irredeemable notes caused distrust of paper money. Only metal was accepted – silver or gold, raw or minted, including Spanish and Mexican money.

The following coins circulated in the Old West.

Gold Eagle, \$10 (27 coins per lb.)

Half Eagle, \$5 (52/lb.)

Quarter Eagle, \$2.50 (104/lb.)

Silver Dollar (17/lb.)

Half Dollar (36/lb.)

Quarter Dollar (72/lb.)

Dime (182/lb.)

Half Dime (365/lb.)

Copper Cent (42/lb.; 97/lb. beginning 1857)

Half Cent (53/lb., discontinued 1857)

Silver and gold coins are 90% pure. The U.S. government began minting gold dollars and \$20 double eagles in 1849. In 1853, \$3 gold coins joined the currency. Both were abolished in 1890.

Congress set the ratio of silver to gold at roughly 16 to 1 in 1837. Until 1874, silver was worth slightly more than the face value of the coins, leading to mass exportation of coins to foreign markets. The U.S. accepted foreign gold coins by weight until 1819; silver coins until 1827; and always when selling public lands to immigrants.

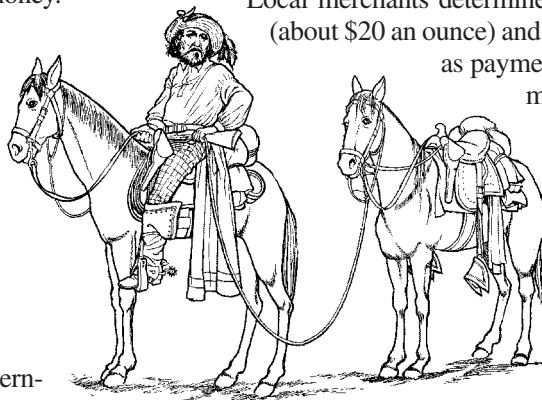
Spanish and Mexican silver was legal tender until 1857. A Spanish or Mexican *peso* (“adobe dollar”) is a large silver coin, worth about \$1. Eight silver *reals* (“ree-ahls”), or bits, make 1 peso. The U.S. quarter dollar is worth two reals, hence the term “two bits.”

Other coins found in the West included Civil War cents – small bronze coins issued by merchants when government-minted coins disappeared – and copper cents, the size of a half-dollar, minted until the mid-1850s. Most businessmen in the Old West avoided any change smaller than two bits. Private Californian mints produced gold coins throughout the Gold Rush, including enormous \$50 slugs.

### Raw Gold

Uncoined gold comes in three forms – dust, flakes, and nuggets. Many mining communities accept gold dust.

Local merchants determine a standard price for gold (about \$20 an ounce) and rarely accept anything else as payment. In the Sierras, the basic measure is a pinch, worth one dollar and usually good for at least one drink. A wineglass of dust is worth \$100, and a tumbler \$1,000. A couple of teaspoons a day – half an ounce, worth \$8 – is the minimum requirement to keep a miner alive and save a little.



# TRADING

Most settlers are desperately poor, and a serious lack of currency makes everyday business difficult. Trading is often done by barter.

In barter, prices are determined by the participants' needs and wants rather than by the monetary value of the articles exchanged. Indians and white traders in the northwest add more goods to the deal until both parties are satisfied. An Indian may trade furs, food, clothing, or even a canoe, for metal knives, combs, wool blankets, alcohol, or ammunition.

Trading between Indians is also based on reciprocal gift-giving. Many tribes stress generosity, but expect the recipient to

repay the gift to the best of their ability. Tradition determines the standard payment for services and goods. An ordinary riding horse is worth 8 buffalo robes, 3 lbs. tobacco, a gun, and 100 rounds of ammunition, or 15 eagle feathers. Exceptional buffalo-hunting or race horses are worth 10 guns or several pack animals.

Whites also trade with one another, especially before civilization sets in. Shop owners may extend credit for up to eight months. Those who have will give to those who need, knowing they too may be in need someday, but most people are happier if they can pay for goods and services with good, solid money.



## Trading Posts

The fur companies established trading posts throughout the northern Plains and Rocky Mountains to trade with the Indians. Main depots typically housed 50-100 men with as much as \$100,000 in trade goods. Regional posts were about 20% as large. Small groups of men also set up temporary posts with less than \$3,000 in trade goods.

Trade goods include beads, weapons and ammunition, wool blankets, and fine cloth. Trappers and mountain men outfit themselves from the posts as well, at slightly better prices than those quoted to the Indians. Even so, the fur companies discount the furs received and inflate the supply prices, especially whiskey.

Pelt and skin values vary from year to year, but these are some standard values. A buffalo robe, beaver pelt, or elk skin is worth one of the following: 30 rounds of ammunition (ball and shot), one common blanket, one shirt, or 1/2 yard blue or scarlet cloth. Eight skins or robes earn a light musket; 12 earn a rifle. A muskrat or mink skin nets one of: 2 flints, 1 awl, 1 fish hook, 2 loads of ammunition, or 4 bells. A good dressed antelope or deer skin commands 10 loads of ammunition.

## The General Store

The general store or “shebang” is the community’s meeting-house, post-office, and supply depot. Dry goods and hardware cram the shelves. Preserved meats and cookware hang from the rafters. Kegs and barrels of everything from molasses to flour clutter the sparse floor space. And every general store has glass jars of candy on the counter.

Prices depend on the cost of transportation, availability of goods, and local competition. Many customers buy on credit and pay when they can with whatever they have.

## Sutlers

The military appoints a civilian sutler, or storekeeper, for each military post. The sutler draws no pay but is granted the rank of warrant officer – higher than the enlisted men but below the officers. He pays 10 cents per soldier in return for a trading monopoly. The sutler sells practically everything not supplied by the government, including extra clothing and personal items. Most posts prohibit the sale of liquor, but the sutler usually finds a way.

## BOUNTIES

“Dead or Alive” rewards were offered by banks, railroads, or other companies that had been robbed, as well as state and federal governments. As late as 1928, the Texas Bankers Association was printing notices saying “REWARD \$5,000 for Dead Bank Robbers, Not One Cent for Live Ones.” Bounties were offered for Indian scalps until 1866 in Arizona Territory, and until 1870 in Mexico.

One of the largest rewards offered in the Old West, \$75,000, was for John Glanton, suspected of murdering and scalping Mexicans and other dark-complexioned people for the bounty.

When he was killed by Yuma Indians in 1852, the U.S. government refused to pay, not wanting to reward Indians for killing a white man.

Glanton was not the only man to abuse the bounty system. After a \$3,500 bounty was put on the head of Doolin gang safe blower “Dynamite Dick” Clifton, reward-hungry posses delivered many corpses in the hope of receiving the reward. Because “Dynamite Dick” was known to be missing three fingers, some bounty hunters would amputate three of their victims’ fingers – but rarely the right ones.

## CLOTHING

Fancy dress in the Old West meant linen shirts, black silk bow-tied cravats, and a fancy paper collar – worn once, then thrown away. A black broadcloth frock coat with tails, fine trousers, and polished leather boots completed the outfit. The brocaded vest sported a derringer or two in the pockets. A soft felt slouch hat, “planters’ hat,” bowler, or silk high hat topped it all.

A cowboy’s bandana could be put to many uses – hat tie, mask, bandage, tourniquet, towel, a sling for a broken arm, a blindfold for a skittish horse, or to hang a horse thief. Soldiers wore non-regulation cotton bandanas in the branch color (yellow for cavalry, red for artillery, and blue for infantry). Officers wore silk neckerchiefs.

Frontier ladies wore bustled dresses with ruffles and lace when they went socializing. Accessories included drawers, petticoats, bust pads, and garters. Fancy hats, purses, mitts, and earrings also had their places. Women rode sidesaddle in riding habits. Toward the end of the century, split riding skirts came into fashion and women began to ride astride.

## Stetsons

In 1865, John B. Stetson began manufacturing his world-famous hats. By the time he died in 1906, the John B. Stetson company was selling two million hats a year, worldwide. A genuine Stetson cost \$10 or more (usually a *lot* more), but would last almost forever.

Mexican sombreros also found their way into the West, particularly in territories originally held by Spain. Stylish wearers dented the high crown to a blunt point, and let the chin strap dangle under their jaw.

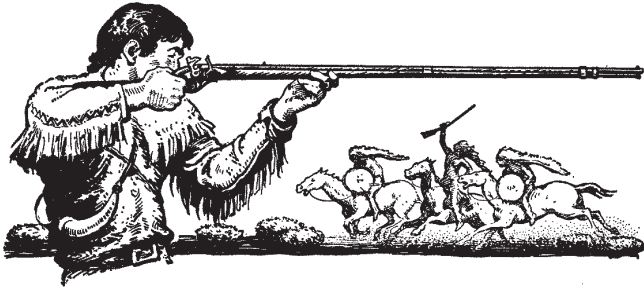
## Holsters

Holsters were originally designed to protect guns from dust and prevent them from falling out while the wearer was riding. Most holsters had flaps until the mid-1870s, when the first fast-draw holsters (designed for the Colt Peacemaker) became available. See pp. CII87-88 for holster types.



## Protective Clothing and Armor

To protect themselves from bushes, thorns, and so on, Westerners wore leather jackets, boots, gloves, and cloth hats. (Use the protective stats given on p. B210.) A cowboy's chaps – leather leggings – protect him from brambles and thorns. They also offer some protection in a fight. Chaps cover the legs (areas 12-16; PD2, DR1), but not the groin.



A cloth overcoat (10 lbs.) gives PD 0, DR 1 (see p. B210); a fur or buffalo coat (20 lbs.) gives PD 2, DR 2 to the same areas. Either adds +3 to Holdout skill, as does a frock coat or “duster.”

## Body Armor

Concealed breastplates were worn by officers in the Civil War, and possibly by gunslingers after this. (Wyatt Earp was accused of wearing one to gunfights, but denied it.) PD 4, DR 10; 12 lbs., \$18. See p. B211.

## Indian Armor

Some Indian warriors wear cuirasses or breastplates of leather, cane, or wooden slats; see p. 59.

## Mail Vest

Worn by Tong enforcers in Chinatown. \$10. See p. CII43.

# PRICE LIST

The prices given are approximate – they will fluctuate according to time and place. The GM may double or triple prices to reflect availability, shipping costs, and other campaign factors. “Boom” town economies may demand prices 5 or 10 times

those listed (apples sold for \$5 each in the gold fields in '49). In “Busted” economies, most items can't be had for *any* price.

Certain items have dates indicating when they became available. Most items listed are available throughout the “classic” period (1865-1885).

# ENTERTAINMENT AND OUTDOOR LIFE

## Entertainment

	Weight	Price
Banjo	12 lbs.	\$12.50
Bible	2 lbs.	\$5.00
Bordello, “boarding” (overnight stay)		\$30.00
Castanets	negligible	\$45
Circus, ticket		\$.50
Concertina	6 lbs.	\$8.00
Dance hall, one dance ticket		\$.50
Dance hall, “quick date”		\$5.00
Deck of marked cards, mail order (+2 to Gambling skill)	negligible	\$1.25
Deck of regular cards	negligible	\$.17
Dice	negligible	\$.25
Fancy bordello, “boarding” (also needs letter of introduction)		\$50.00-\$100.00
Guitar	10 lbs.	\$8.20
Harmonica	negligible	\$.50
Jew's harp	negligible	\$.15
Musical production, ticket		\$.50
Newspaper	negligible	\$.01
Novel, paperback	negligible	\$.10
Piano, upright	800 lbs.	\$100.00
Poker chips, 1000	1 lb.	\$2.75
Stage play, ticket		\$1.00
Trombone	5 lbs.	\$9.00
Trumpet (cornet)	4 lbs.	\$11.00
Violin (fiddle)	4 lbs.	\$9.50
Wild West show, ticket		\$.50

## Outdoor Life

	Weight	Price
(For weapons, see <i>Weapon Table</i> , pp. 88-90.)		
Ammunition, .22 metal cartridge (100)	2 lbs.	\$1.40
Ammunition, .32-.38 metal cart. (100)	4 lbs.	\$2.50
Ammunition, .41-.45 metal cart. (100)	6.5 lbs.	\$3.25
Ammunition, .59-.90 (100)	6.5 lbs.	\$4.75
Ammunition, lead balls	5 lbs.	\$.35
Ammunition, black powder	1 lbs.	\$.50
Bed roll	10 lbs.	\$4.00
Binoculars, 5x (1850)	2.5 lbs.	\$15.00
Binoculars, 10x (1850)	3 lbs.	\$25.00
Canteen	1 lbs.	\$0.50
Compass	negligible	\$2.00
Gun cleaning kit	1 lbs.	\$1.50
Oil for lamps, etc. (1 gallon)	8 lbs.	\$.10
Oil lamp	4 lbs.	\$1.50
Percussion caps (100)	negligible	\$.60
Scabbard, rifle	2 lbs.	\$2.50
Telescope, range 14 miles	3 lbs.	\$15.00
Tent, miner's (for one)	30 lbs.	\$6.00
Tin plate, cup, fork, spoon set for one	1 lbs.	\$.30
Trail cook's kit (fry pan, stew pot, coffee pot, etc.)	80 lbs.	\$3.00
Trap w/chain, 5" jaw (mink)	2.5 lbs.	\$.25
Trap w/chain, 6.5" jaw (beaver)	3 lbs.	\$.39
Trap w/chain, 8" jaw (wolf)	9 lbs.	\$1.85
Trap w/chain, 16" jaw (bear)	17 lbs.	\$11.75



# EVERYDAY NECESSITIES

## Clothing and Personal Items

Bandana	negligible	\$ .10
Boots, military or cowboy	3.5 lbs.	\$5.00
Boots, custom made	3.5 lbs.	\$25.00
Buckskin shirt	3 lbs.	\$2.00
Buckskin trousers	3 lbs.	\$1.75
Buffalo robe	40 lbs.	\$10.00
Candles, wax (1 dozen)	1 lbs.	\$ .10
Cap, broadcloth	negligible	\$ .50
Cartridge belt (holds 50 rounds)	2 lbs.	\$1.00
Chaps	6.5 lbs.	\$4.50
Cigar, cheroot	negligible	\$ .05
Cigar, "the kind Buffalo Bill smokes"	negligible	2 for \$ .25
Dress	4 lbs.	\$1.50
Hat, derby	0.5 lbs.	\$2.00
Hat, cowboy	1 lbs.	\$3.00
Hat, Stetson	1 lbs.	\$20.00
Hat, lady's feathered	1 lb.	\$4.00
Hat, sombrero	0.5 lbs.	\$3.50
Holster	0.25 lbs.	\$1.00
Holster, Hollywood	0.25 lbs.	\$5.00
Holster, shoulder	0.5 lbs.	\$1.50
Holster, swivel	0.25 lbs.	\$3.75
Knife, pocket	negligible	\$ .50
Matches, safety (1855) (box of 240)	negligible	\$ .10
Mirror, brush, comb set	2 lbs.	\$3.00
Overcoat, cloth	10 lbs.	\$8.00
Overcoat, fur	20 lbs.	\$15.00
Razor, straight	negligible	\$1.25
Shirt	negligible	\$ .50
Shoes, men's or women's	2 lbs.	\$3.50
Slicker (yellow)	4.5 lbs.	\$4.00
Soap, cake	negligible	\$ .03
Socks, 1 pair	negligible	\$ .01
Suit, man's or woman's	6 lbs.	\$12.00
Tobacco (1 oz.)		
(smoking, snuff, or chewing)	negligible	\$ .10
Travel trunk	25 lbs.	\$5.00
Spurs, plain	negligible	\$0.50

Spurs, fancy	negligible	\$10.00
Trousers	3 lbs.	\$1.50
Watch, pocket with chain	negligible	\$4.00
Union suit	1.5 lbs.	\$ .75

## Food

Bacon, side	40 lbs.	\$ .10
Beer, glass		\$ .05
Beer, small keg	10 lbs.	\$2.00
Chewing gum, 100 pieces	5 lbs.	\$ .25
Chocolate, 8 oz. tin	0.5 lbs.	\$ .10
Coffee, 2 lb. tin	2 lbs.	\$ .50
Corned beef	100 lbs.	\$5.75
Crackers	25 lbs.	\$1.50
Flour, sack	50 lbs.	\$4.00
Meal, average		\$ .25
Meal, good		\$ .75
Meal, train		\$1.50
Oatmeal, sack	50 lbs.	\$4.00
Rations (salt meat, flour, beans for 1 week)	10 lbs.	\$1.00
Sugar, 1 lb.	1 lbs.	\$ .10
Tea, 6 oz. tin	6 oz.	\$ .50
Whiskey, shot		\$ .10
Whiskey, bottle	3 lbs.	\$1.25

## Housing and Services

Bath	\$ .50
Bath (clean water)	\$1.00
Hotel, poor (per night)	\$ .25
Hotel, average (per night)	\$ .75
Hotel, good (per night)	\$2.00
Hotel, high falutin' (per night)	\$6.00
Room (per week)	\$1.00
Room and board (per week)	\$2.50
Shave and haircut	\$0.25
Stable, overnight, for man or beast (per night)	\$ .25

# HOMESTEADING

## Household Items

Bedroom set	275 lbs.	\$21.00
Cook stove	300 lbs.	\$40.00
Cookware set	80 lbs.	\$3.00
Dining room set	400 lbs.	\$50.00
Dishes, setting for six	80 lbs.	\$12.00
Glassware, setting for six	40 lbs.	\$8.00
Oil lamp, fancy parlor type	10 lbs.	\$1.50
Parlor suite (couch, 4-5 chairs)	325 lbs.	\$40.00
Sewing machine (1851)	50 lbs.	\$25.00
Silverware, setting for six	4 lbs.	\$5.00

## Land

Homestead (160 acres; land must be worked for five consecutive years)	\$10
Townsite (320 acres; could be subdivided into 450 lots, 125 ft. deep x 25 ft. wide) (Founders' price)	\$400
Townsite, quarter (80 acres) (Founders' price)	\$100
Town lot (poor location)	\$50
Town lot (Main Street location)	\$400
Town lot (choice location)	\$1,000

# TOOLS AND PROFESSIONAL EQUIPMENT

## Business Supplies

Cash box with lock	2 lbs.	\$ .60
Envelopes (1 dozen)	negligible	\$ .05
Paper (100 sheets)	negligible	\$ .25
Pen, fountain	negligible	\$2.50
Pen, quill	negligible	\$ .05
Pencil (1 dozen)	negligible	\$ .10

Postcard	negligible	\$ .01
Printing press, small	50 lbs.	\$45.00
Steel safe (inside 12" x 8" x 9"; outside 24" x 15" x 15")	300 lbs.	\$13.25
Steel safe (inside 28" x 21" x 18"; outside 47" x 32" x 30")	2,100 lbs.	\$82.50
Typewriter (1867)	20 lbs.	\$34.00



## Medical Equipment

Doctor's bag with instruments	15 lbs.	\$25.00
Ether* (1844), anesthetic	negligible	\$.25/dose
Eyeglasses	negligible	\$2.00
Laudanum, for pain	4 oz.	\$.35
Nitrous oxide, "laughing gas"	negligible	\$.25/dose
Quinine (1803), for malarial fever	4 oz.	\$.50
Veterinary bag with instruments	20 lbs.	\$22.00
Wondercure (pint)	1 lbs.	\$2.00

\* Flammable: when heated in closed container, an air/ether mixture will explode for 1d damage.

## Tools

Anvil	80 lbs.	\$15.00
Axe	6 lbs.	\$1.00
Barbed wire (50 yds.) (1868)	20 lbs.	\$1.00
Blacksmith's tool set		
(bellows, hammer, tongs, etc.)	100 lbs.	\$15.00
Blasting caps (1 dozen)	negligible	\$.50

## Carpenter's tool set

(level, plane, saw, square, etc.)	30 lbs.	\$21.00
Dynamite, black market (1866-1872)	.5 lbs.	\$1.00/stick
Dynamite, legal (1872)	.5 lbs.	\$.25/stick
Electronic detonator (1870)	1 lbs.	\$5.00
Fuse (per yard)	negligible	\$.05
Handsaw	2 lbs.	\$1.50
Hammer	2 lbs.	\$.50
Lantern	2 lbs.	\$.80
Nitroglycerine (1846)	1 oz.	\$.50
Ore car	150 lbs.	\$15.00
Pan	.5 lbs.	\$.10
Pick	6 lbs.	\$.75
Plow (horse-drawn)	80 lbs.	\$6.50
Rope (per yard)	negligible	\$.05
Scales	10 lbs.	\$3.00
Shovel	6 lbs.	\$.50
Wirecutters*	2 lbs.	\$2.50
Wheelbarrow, steel, for miners	80 lbs.	\$6.00

\*In some places, at some times, possession of wirecutters was considered proof of intent to cut fences . . . a hanging offense.

# TRANSPORT, TRAVEL, AND COMMUNICATIONS

## Transportation

(For animals, see *Critters*, pp. 117-121.)

Buggy (capacity 2 people, 500 lbs.)	380 lbs.	\$40.00
Surrey (capacity 4 people, 800 lbs.)	500 lbs.	\$90.00
Canoe	90 lbs.	\$10.00
Consolidation locomotive	57 tons	\$9,750.00
Flatboat	4 tons	\$1.50/ft
Harness (single)	15 lbs.	\$10.00
Harness (team, per 2 horses)	40 lbs.	\$25.00
Keelboat	6 tons	\$3.00/ft
Pullman car	20 tons	\$20,000.00
Quirt (Spanish riding whip)	negligible	\$1.25
Saddle and bridle, fancy (cowboys)	25 lbs.	\$60.00
Saddle and bridle, plain	20 lbs.	\$27.50
Saddlebags and saddle blanket	10 lbs.	\$8.25
Stagecoach (not including six horses)	2,500 lbs.	\$1,500.00
Steamboat	60 tons	\$100,000.00
Wagon, light (capacity 1,200 lbs.)	500 lbs.	\$30.00
Wagon, heavy (capacity 4,500 lbs.)	1,085 lbs.	\$40.00

Stagecoach: St. Louis to San Francisco (25 days)	\$200
Steamboat: St. Louis to Fort Benton	\$300
Train: Omaha to Sacramento, 1st class, express	\$100
Train: Omaha to Sacramento, 2nd class, express	\$75

## Mail

Letter, by mail (1861-1883)	\$.03/half oz.
Letter, by mail (1884)	\$.02/oz.
Letter, by Pony Express (1860; per half-ounce)	\$5.00
Letter, by Pony Express (1861; per half-ounce)	\$1.00
Package, by mail (1870)	\$.01/oz.
Package, Overland Express (1859; up to 20 lbs.)	\$.10/lb.
Package, rail freight (1870; over 100 lbs.)	\$.08/lb.
Telegram	\$.50/word

## Bounties

Billy the Kid (1880)	\$500
James, Frank (1876)	\$15,000
James, Jesse (1870)	\$500
James, Jesse (1882)	\$10,000
Starr, Sam and Belle (1885)	\$10,000
Typical bank robber	\$100-\$1,000
Typical stagecoach robber	\$50-\$100
Typical train robber	\$100-\$500
Army deserter	\$30 (\$100 after 1885)
Scalp, male Indian	\$100
Scalp, female Indian	\$50
Scalp, Indian child	\$25

## Travel Fares

Ship: N.Y. to San Francisco (1848), around Cape Horn (168 days)	\$80.00
Ship: N.Y. to San Francisco (1848), across Panama (70-90 days; scalper's prices)	\$200.00
Stagecoach: Local (per mile)	\$.15
Stagecoach: Express (per 50 miles)	\$3.00

# JOB TABLE

## Poor

Indian Police (Guns 12+), \$8 + room and board
Laborer, unskilled (ST 11+), \$12
Launderer* (no qualifications), \$12
Ne'er-do-well* (no qualifications), \$5
Private (Guns 10+), \$13+room and board

## Success Roll

Worst of ST, IQ
ST-1
IQ
10
PR

## Critical Failure

3d/LJ
2d/LJ
-1i/LJ
-1i/3d
-1i/3d



## Struggling

### Success Roll

### Critical Failure

Cowboy (Animal Handling 12+, Lasso 10+), \$40 + room and board	Best PR	-2i/2d
Farm Laborer (IQ 9), \$35 + room and board	12	LJ
Farmer* (Agronomy 12+, ST 10+, some land), \$50	PR	-1i/-3i
Hunter (Guns 12+, Survival 12+), \$40	Best PR	2d
Indian Interpreter (Language (Indian) 10+), \$50	PR	LJ/scalped
Laborer, railroad (ST 10+), \$50	ST	LJ
Lumberjack (ST, Climbing), \$35	Best PR	3d
Miner (ST 10+), \$50	PR	-2i/2d
Sergeant (Guns 12+), \$20+room and board	PR	2d/demoted
Stock Tender (Animal Handling 10+), \$40	PR	LJ
Teacher (Teaching 9+, Academic skill 9+), \$20 + room and board	Best PR	LJ
Trail Cook (Teamster 12+, Cooking 8+), \$50 + room and board	Best PR	LJ/1d
Trapper (Traps 12+, Survival 12+), \$40	Best PR	2d/-3i

## Average

Blacksmith (Blacksmith 10+, Animal Handling 10+, ST 10+), \$75	Best PR	2d
Buffalo Skinner* (Butcher 10+), \$60	PR	-2i/LJ
Carpenter* (Craft skill 11+), \$65	PR	-1i
Dance Hall Girl (Dancing 11+), \$100	PR+Reaction	-2i/LJ
Detective* (Criminology 13+ or Streetwise 12+), \$80	PR	2d,-2i
Doctor* (Physician 12+), \$100	PR	-1i/-6i
Express Messenger (IQ 11+, Guns 12+), \$60 + room and board	IQ	LJ
Gambler* (Gambling 11+), \$100	PR	-3i/-6i or 3d
Indian Agent (Administration 12+, Fast-Talk 10+), \$100	Best PR	LJ
Newspaper Editor* (Writing 14+, Mechanic (Printing Press) 12+), \$85	Best PR	-2i/LJ
Outlaw* (Guns 14+, 2 or more Thief skills 12+), \$100	Worst PR	2d/jail
Packer (Packing 12+), \$75	PR	LJ
Postmaster (Administration 12+), \$85	PR	-2i/LJ
Prospector* (Prospecting 12+), \$85	PR	-2i/3d
Ranch Foreman (Administration 10+, Leadership 10+), \$65 + room and board	Best PR	LJ
Sheriff (Weapon skill 12+, Administration 10+, Politics 10+), \$60 + fees	IQ	2d/LJ
Shopkeeper* (Professional or Craft skill 12+, shop), \$100	PR	-1i/-3i
“Soiled Dove”* (Sex Appeal 10+), \$100	PR	-2i/2d
Stage Driver (Teamster 12+), \$75	PR	2d/LJ
Teamster (Animal Handling 12+, Teamster 12+, Whip 12+), \$65	Best PR	LJ
Town Marshal (Combat skill 12+), \$50 + fees	PR	2d/LJ
Trail Boss (Leadership 12+), \$100 + room and board	PR	-2i
Traveling Salesman* (Merchant 11+, Fast-Talk 11+), \$100	Best PR	-2i

## Comfortable

Business Owner* (Merchant 11+, Administration 12+), \$250	Administration	-3i/-10i
Lawyer* (Law 12+), \$150	PR	-2i/-5i
Lieutenant (Leadership 10+, Tactics 10+), \$120 + room and board	Best PR	3d/Rank-1
Pony Express Rider (Riding 14+), \$125	PR	3d
Stationmaster (Administration 12+), \$100 + room and board	PR	LJ
Steamboat Engineer (Mechanic (Steam Engines) 12+), \$150	PR	LJ/3d
Steamboat Mate (Ship Handling 10+, Leadership 10+), \$150	Worst PR	-1i/LJ
Surveyor (Surveying 12+), \$150	PR	-2i/LJ
Wagon Master* (Leadership 12+, Area Knowledge 12+), \$150	Worst PR	2d/LJ

## Wealthy

Buffalo Hunter* (Guns 14+), \$1000	PR	2d/-3i
Large Business Owner* (Merchant 11+, Administration 12+, Status 2+), \$1,500	Administration	-3i/-10i
Pilot (Ship Handling 12+, Area Knowledge (river) 14+), \$600	Worst PR	LJ
Steamboat Captain (Ship Handling 11+, Leadership 10+), \$300	Worst PR	-1i/-6i

## Filthy Rich

Business Baron* (Merchant 12+, Administration 12+, Status 2+, Industry), \$3,000	Administration	-3i/-10i
Politician or Governor* (Politics 12+, Status 2+, Constituency), \$5,000	PR	-3i/LJ

\* Freelance jobs. Base income is earned when the skill roll is made *exactly*. For other successful rolls, increase the month's income by 10% for every point the roll was made by. If the roll is failed, reduce income by 10% for every point the roll was missed by. A Critical Success *triples* the month's income. If a Critical Failure is rolled, earn nothing – and check the table for other penalties.



## CHAPTER 3

# TRANSPORTATION

In an age of commuter planes from New York to Los Angeles and four-hour Concorde flights across the Atlantic, people tend to forget that travel – until *very* recently – was a long, arduous, and *risky* business. This was especially true in the Old West.





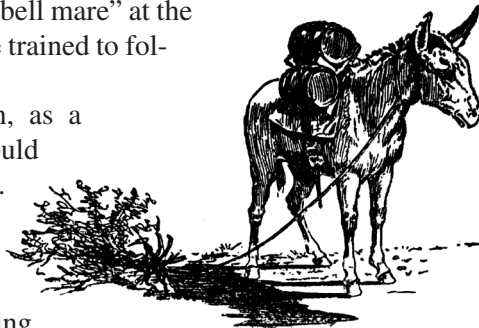
# OVERLAND

Pack and wagon trains provisioned and populated the West until the 1860s. Several different types of ground transportation were available.

## MULE TRAINS

Until roads and trails were developed, only pack trains could make it over the mountains. A pack caravan of 50-200 mules could travel 12-15 miles a day. A packer led the "bell mare" at the head of the caravan – the mules were trained to follow the sound of her bell.

The march didn't rest at noon, as a mule that lay down with a pack could cripple itself getting up again. Packers (one per eight mules) constantly checked the loads, each about 300 lbs.; the loads settled as the walk progressed and could swing under the animal's belly or fall off.

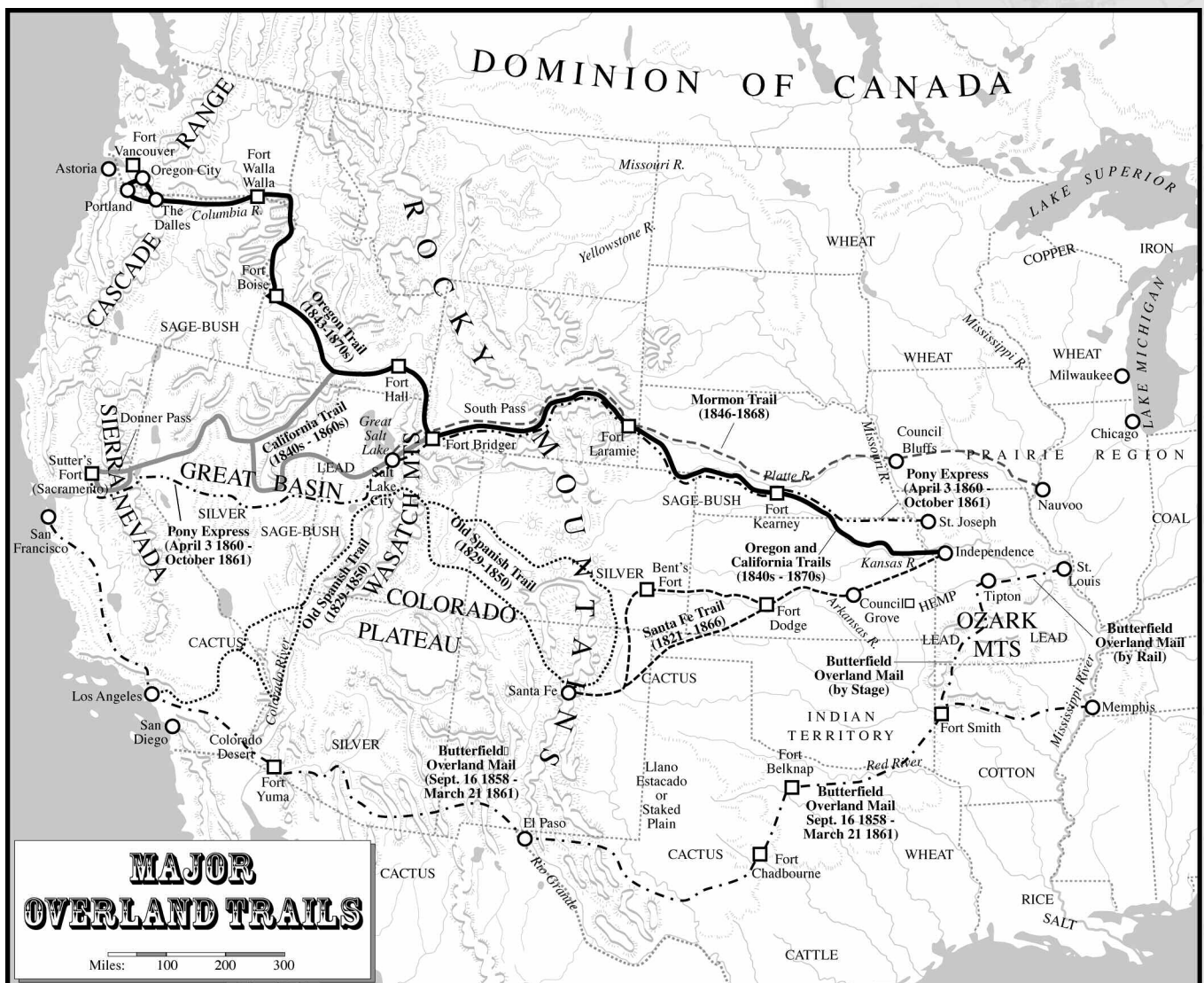


## OVERLAND HAZARDS

Any number of hazards can assail an overland traveler. If a team spooks or a harness breaks while fording a stream, the wagon may be upset or float away. A team that panics while fording may drown itself by plunging about with the wagon attached. If a wagon is overturned or isn't packed correctly, all its goods get wet – it takes two dry days and an acre of land to dry a typical wagon's contents. Wagons stuck in the mud must be double-teamed out – a second team is hitched on to help pull the wagon free.

For normal travel, refer to *Riding and Draft Animals*, pp. B144-5. Distances traveled each day are 12 miles for oxen, 15-18 miles for mules or horses under pack or in harness. For riding distances, see p. B187.

For river crossings, refer to *Bad Footing*, p. B107, and the *Swimming* rules on p. B91. Animals have swimming skills equal to their DX, but are at -1 if being ridden or bearing a pack, and -6 if in harness or yoke. For travel across a desert, see *Starvation and Dehydration*, p. B128, *Heat*, p. B130, and *Lost in the Desert*, p. B236.





## OTHER VEHICLES

Travelers who don't want to ride usually take a horse- or mule-drawn conveyance. Some well-to-do city people have carriages that match their European counterparts' bright paint and gilding ounce for ounce. Of course, mules never draw fine carriages. The following are common vehicles – most are about 5 feet wide, measured wheel to wheel.

### BUCKBOARDS

These light farm or ranch wagons, pulled by two horses, are little more than long boards with wheels on the sides. Springs under the seats add to the bouncy ride and the driver can prop his feet against the dashboard. A minuscule rail supposedly prevents the packages in back from toppling off. Weight is about 500 lbs., with a carrying capacity of 1,200 lbs.

### BUGGIES

These favorite horse-drawn vehicles have a leather or painted canvas folding top (with an open back or small mica window) over a wide padded seat. On fancy models, a waterproof curtain with rein-slits and another small mica window keeps the traveler dry. Buggies rarely have brakes, but they do have a whip socket on the right of the dashboard. One horse can draw a buggy, which a man can right if it overturns. Weight is about 380 lbs., with a carrying capacity of 500 lbs.

### JUMP-SEAT WAGON

Stables rent these boxy affairs, which have a short bench seat and fixed sides, back, and roof. They are pulled by two horses. Rental is \$1 per night or \$4-5 for the whole day, horses included. Weight is about 800 lbs., with a carrying capacity of 2,500 lbs. Jump-seat wagons could also be decorated with black plumes to double as hearses, and many stable owners became undertakers.



## WAGON TRAINS

Freight trains headed out in spring, when the prairie grass grew high enough to feed the teams. Twenty-six wagons (including a kitchen wagon) supported about 35 men. There were 10 mules or six yoke of oxen per wagon, and perhaps 30 spare animals. Each train had a captain and lieutenant (an elected leader and second).

Bull trains averaged 12 miles a day, mule trains 15-20. Drivers called "gee" to head the team right, "haw" for left, and "whoa" to stop. (Indians thought whites called cattle "wohoss" and wagons "goddams.") "Bullwhackers" drove ox teams, "mule skinnners" handled the mules.

The animals grazed for about an hour three times a day. "Nooning" (a rest break) lasted from 10:00 a.m. until 2:00 or 3:00 p.m. The afternoon march lasted until sundown. Teamsters circled the wagons in an oval perhaps 70' to 80' wide by 120' to 130' long. In dangerous areas, the teams stayed inside the circle; when no trouble was expected, they grazed outside.

### Conestoga Wagons

These nearly indestructible wagons started heading west in the 1830s.

A Conestoga is 16' long, 4' wide, and 4' deep. Its bed is slightly bowl-shaped so loads won't tumble out. Six or more wagon bows hold up the cover, which cantilevers over the bed. The tool box contains some small spare wagon parts as well as tools. Tied to the wagon are the wagon jack, essential for wheel repair, and water and tar buckets. The Prussian blue body, red running gear, and white canvas cover make a new Conestoga very patriotic.

Three pairs of draft horses (the lead, swing, and wheel teams) pulled the wagon 12-18 miles on a good day. The driver usually rode the left wheel horse. The horses wore blinders and bells. If draft horses were unavailable or unaffordable, 10 mules or two yoke of oxen could haul a Conestoga.

### Prairie Schooners

These smaller descendants of the Conestogas were developed in the late 1840s.

A prairie schooner is 14' long and 4 1/2' wide, with 5 1/2' sides. Four horses or eight mules could pull one easily; oxen were seldom used. The driver sat on the right of the box seat. Prairie schooners have a low canvas bonnet, and are also painted blue and red.

## STAGECOACHES

Stagecoaches began crisscrossing the West with passengers, letters and parcels, gold dust, and bullion in the late 1850s. Traveling more than 1,900 miles in 17-20 days, the overland mail made about a hundred miles each day. In a record run, one four-horse team hauled nearly half a ton of mail and 14 people 14 miles in 52 minutes – 16 miles an hour!

The premier stagecoach was the Concord coach, of Concord, New Hampshire. Two cushioned seats faced each other from the carriage's front and rear, with a removable leather bench between. The box under the driver's seat hid tools, the strongbox, a water-bucket, and a buffalo robe. A seat for three was sometimes added on the roof behind the driver. A large rear boot carried the baggage, express packages, and mail. Extra packages or mail went on the roof. A waterproof curtain enclosed the carriage in bad weather.



The bright red carriage body hung on two leather straps attached to the carriage frame. It gave a smooth ride over any type of road. Some passengers claimed it felt like the ocean – those prone to motion sickness beware.

The stagecoach typically held 15 – the record was 35. Three could fit on each of the inside benches, for a total of nine, although six was usual. The driver, express messenger, and sometimes a passenger sat on the box. Three passengers could brave the roof seat, and more might simply cling to the roof. The back seat (facing forward) was the most desirable, the front next, the middle a poor third, and the roof a long fourth. Seats were reserved at ticket purchase. Passengers could bring 25 lbs. of baggage – extra baggage cost \$1 per lb.

Stagecoaches could travel eight miles an hour. About every 12 miles, the coach stopped at a station to change horses, and the travelers stretched their legs. Passengers slept sitting up in the coach. An exhausted traveler could spend a night at a station – but with only one coach each way each day, there was no way to avoid night travel.

## THE RAILROAD

Barely 40 years passed between the railroad's introduction and the transcontinental railroad. The steam-powered locomotive supplanted almost every form of long-distance and commercial travel, even its cousin the steamboat, well before the end of the century.

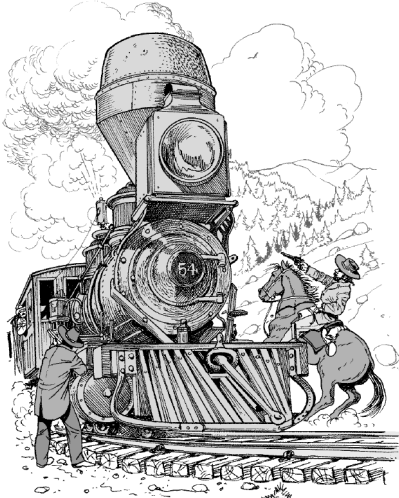
Even the railroad builders had no idea how successful their baby would be. In the 1830s and 1840s, more than 200 railroad lines and nearly 1,000 miles of rails covered the North, South, and Midwest. By 1860, the Union had 20,000 miles of track, the Confederacy 10,000. Railroads increased passenger travel five-fold, and demand for space on railroad cars greatly outstripped supply throughout the century. By the late 1890s, railroads employed 5% of the population.

### *The Transcontinental Railway*

In 1862, the Pacific Railroad Act sanctioned the transcontinental railway from Omaha to Sacramento. The Central Pacific company (CP) drove east over the Sierra Nevadas; the Union Pacific company (UP) headed west up the Platte River valley. The UP hired "Irish Terriers," the CP Chinese "Coolies." Roustabouts graded the beds with pick, shovel, and handcart. Five men laid four 500-lb. rails per minute, 400 rails to the mile. Work trains hauled tools and a smithy, bunkcars, dining cars, kitchen, storeroom, and engineers' office. Crews needed 40 carloads of supplies every day.

Each company had problems: Indians sometimes attacked the UP survey teams or construction camps and the Sierra Nevada Mountains daunted the CP workers. Saloonkeepers, con men, dance hall girls, and gamblers followed the CP crews, building tent cities and makeshift towns – "hells on wheels" – every 50 miles.

In 1869, VIPs drove the Golden Spike at Promontory Point, north of the Great Salt Lake. Passenger service began within the week.



## STAGECOACH HAZARDS

A three-week, cross-country stagecoach trip is not for the fainthearted. Passengers are at the mercy of sudden blizzards, the constant rocking, breakdowns, endless horse changes, sudden illness, bandits, Indians, and each others' Odious Personal Habits. Claustrophobia and lack of sleep drive some passengers berserk. (On one trip, a man knifed a fellow passenger and gunned down two more before being shot and killed.)

A stagecoach may overturn on bad roads; if they're not badly hurt, the passengers can right it. Harness breakages sometimes result in loose teams. Teams may also run away, possibly overturning the stage or losing a wheel. If the stage can't be fixed on the spot, the best thing to do is wait for the next one.

## RAILROAD CARS

Various types of cars could be attached to a locomotive. Railroad crews pumped themselves along on little handcars, which could even outrun an Indian attack. Early rail inspectors used a sail-car – it was no trouble to keep ahead of an early locomotive.

The standard railroad car was boxy, with end entrances, two rows of seats with a middle aisle, and a slightly barrelled ceiling. Each end had an open platform with a light iron railing and a ladder to the roof. The roof had a thin walkway for brakemen. Its average dimensions were about 35' long, 10' high, and 8' wide (slightly less inside).

*Business cars* – The express car held express cargo and its guard, the express messenger (usually Wells, Fargo). In case of train robbery (see pp. 47-49), it was a prime target. Another target was the mail car, which was a traveling Post Office, complete with mail clerk. It also had a mail catcher – a bent iron bar to snag mail bags off posts as the train speeds by. Freight box cars hauled baggage, produce, machinery, and anything else. Stock cars carry livestock. The caboose was for the train crew – conductor, porter, brakeman, etc.

*Passenger cars* – More luxurious and costly than first class, the sleeping car, dining car, and parlor car were for affluent passengers. Second-class, while popular, was not as comfortable as first-class. The emigrant car was little better than a cattle car. Cars offering separate compartments for passengers came along in the 1870s. A private car could be attached to any train. These luxuriously furnished homes-on-wheels sported kitchen, bedroom, bathroom, parlor, and possibly a dining room.

The *Pullman cars*, first introduced in 1864, offered no end of luxury. Almost every inch was decorated with inlaid wood and gilding. They had good suspension, folding beds, lounges, mirrors, carpets, plush seats, central heating, and waiters and porters in each car. A Pullman, described as "a rolling palace," was 54' long, 10' high, and 10' wide.



# THE RAILROAD WARS

## RAILROAD BUILDINGS

Most railways set up station houses and woodpiles every 12-15 miles. Each station house had a telegraph for railroad business as well as cellars, rifles, and loopholes in case of Indian attack. An adjoining eating-house served terrible meals for 25 cents to a dollar, and fixed a worse basket lunch for 50 cents. Water tanks and wood yards were scattered along the lines – it took several hours to refill a water tank.

## RAILROAD SPEEDS

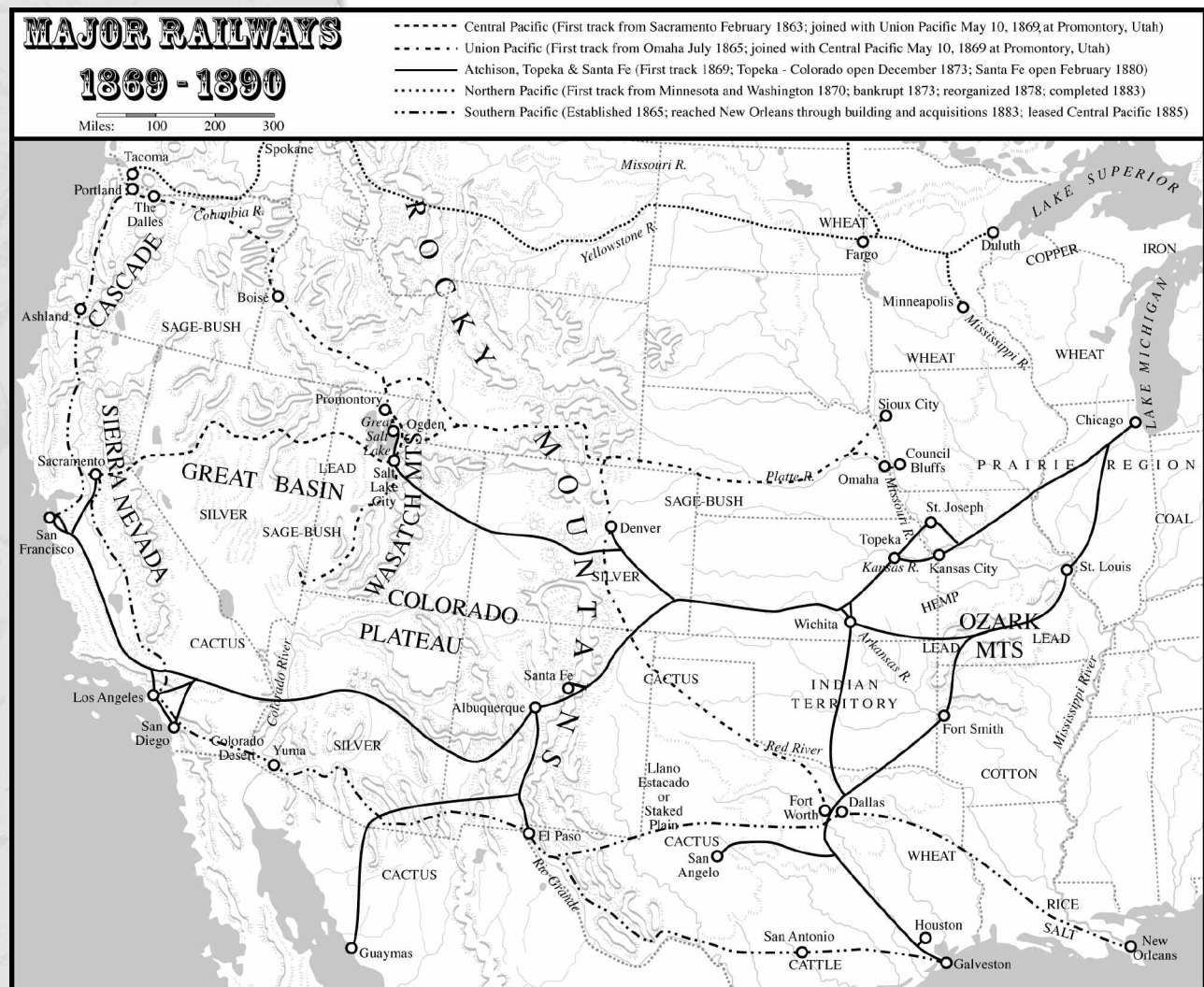
Trains rattled along at 10-18 mph until 1841. In the 1860s, railroad policy set speeds at 25 mph, but trains often made up lost time by traveling 30-35. During the '80s, the allowable speed was 40-45 mph; trains behind schedule hit 60 on straight, level track. By 1893, an American-model locomotive topped out at 112.5 mph.

Wherever the railroad went, violence followed. The railroad companies tried to bankrupt their rivals and keep each other from new markets. Settlers and Indians tried to force the railroads off their lands, and train robbers posed a threat as well.

## INTERNECINE WARFARE

Since gauges weren't standardized until the 1880s, only one railroad could serve each area – competition often turned ugly. The Denver & Rio Grande (DRG) and the Atchison, Topeka & Santa Fe (ATSF) lines fought for the Leadville silver mine service in 1878.

They first tangled at Royal Gorge, the only pass into Leadville, where sheer rock cliffs towered 3,500' over miles of 50' wide gorge. Grading crews faced off in the pass with shovels and shotguns; then the companies deployed armed men throughout the state. The two companies tried to control the telegraph, each other's employees, and the courts. The ATSF hired Bat Masterson and "a string of slaughterers" to protect a roundhouse at Pueblo, but he surrendered when pressed. Denver citizens were disappointed when the two company presidents didn't gun each other down during an accidental meeting. After much shooting and legal maneuvering, the DRG won the pass.





# INDIANS AND THE RAILROADS

The railroads brought whites who took Indians' land and killed the buffalo. Indians attacked the railroad crews, trying to keep the railroad out. The army punished each attack.

Indians tore up tracks and burned the ties. In Kansas, they tried to set fire to a roundhouse, but an engineer upset the attack by driving the locomotive into their midst. Indians attacked the trains, but their arrows, lances, and rifles were ineffectual against the steel cars. (Passengers sometimes shot back with guns passed out by the conductors.)

One Cheyenne chief strung a rawhide rope across the track to catch the iron horse, but his warriors were dragged beneath its wheels. Another group ripped a tie out of the roadbed and lashed it to the track. This succeeded; from the derailed train they took whiskey, cloth, and clothing.

## SETTLERS AND RAILROADS

Settlers established on land later granted to the railroads found they had to pay the railroads, but the price wasn't finalized until the rails were laid – when the land was worth hundreds or thousands an acre. Any farmer's improvements raised the price further. The homesteaders could not pay and often responded with violence.

Exorbitant freight rates sometimes cost the farmers more than the profits on their produce, and small farms didn't get discount freight rates offered on huge shipments. The Grangers, a political group founded in 1867, forced the railroads to institute fair shipping rates and practices.



## HOW TO ROB A TRAIN

Train robberies plagued the railroads from the 1870s on. The armed expressmen in the express cars sometimes foiled robberies, but that stopped few outlaws.

The ideal team of train robbers had six men, although two would do in a pinch. With six, one covered the engineer and fireman, two covered the passengers, and three dealt with the express car and expressman.

### Getting Control of the Train

Robbers could use violent methods to stop a train. Loosening or removing a rail derailed a train. Piling obstacles (such as railroad ties) on the tracks caused a collision. Trains were slow, so most injuries were minor.

Outlaws could stop a train with a flag or standing signal – or they could take over a station and make the stationmaster signal the train to stop. They could switch a train onto a siding. Some swooped down on trains while they were stopped to take on water or wood. Trains also stopped for bonfires on the tracks.

## RAILWAY HAZARDS

In addition to train robberies, any number of potential hazards attended a rail journey. Bridge failures were quite spectacular, sometimes plunging entire trains into yawning chasms. The locomotive could explode. Trains derailed for a variety of reasons. Popped spikes let the rail skew. Of course, ripping up or blocking the tracks would mean derailment as well. Speeding around curves could cause the train to sail off. Brake failure could send one train crashing into another or careening out of control down a mountainside. Improper braking might cause cars to slam into one another or uncouple. Signal errors, switching errors, and other human errors could cause collisions, and hot coals from heating stoves in the passenger cars could set fire to the wreckage of a spilled train.

Deep snows, floods, tornadoes, and prairie fires could halt or destroy a train. Passengers also fell prey to cardsharps (nearly 300 on the Union Pacific alone) and the occasional successful Indian attack.

Some hazards apply to train crews. Freight cars' brake levers were on the roof, and some brakemen slipped off the narrow walkway, especially in winter. To couple cars, the switchman needed to slip a pin into the link-and-pin coupler – if his timing was off, the cars collided and crushed him. The knuckle coupler, introduced in 1868, solved this problem.

## THE IRON HORSE

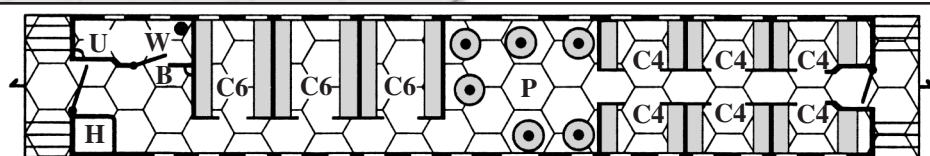
Two locomotives were important in the Old West: the American (1848) and the Consolidation (1870).

The American was the "classic" locomotive, highly ornamented, with cowcatcher, diamond smokestack, bell and whistle, and open cab.

The squat, boxy Consolidation was more common. It could haul 1,205 tons on a nearly level slope and 235 tons on a steep grade, pull 90 loaded cars, and easily make 25 mph.

Each engineer ran a particular locomotive, which he proudly kept in top condition – highly polished and brightly painted. The average train had 20-40 cars. A loaded tender weighed 20 tons and a loaded car 21 tons. Most locomotives lasted 20-30 years; some lasted as long as 50!





1 hex = 1 yard

**B:** Wash basin; **H:** Heater; **U:** Urinal  
**W:** Watercloset; **P:** Parlor with revolving chairs  
**C4/C6:** Sleeping compartments (4 or 6 seats)

## Sleeper/Parlor Car

Longer (70') "Hotel Cars" include kitchens.

## WELLS, FARGO & CO.

Henry Wells and William Fargo had been turning a profit with the American Express company for 10 years when they founded Wells, Fargo & Company in San Francisco on March 18, 1852. The brick building at 114 Montgomery Street sported iron shutters painted Wells, Fargo green. From its first day, the miners put their faith – and their gold – in the company's well-organized, well-equipped office. By the end of the year, Wells, Fargo had 12 branch offices throughout the state. By 1859, there were 126 branches at as many Western mineral deposits, and they kept expanding.

In 1866, Wells, Fargo bought the Butterfield Overland mail route, gaining complete control of Western stagecoaching and mail delivery. They transported any valuables – cash, gold, stocks and bonds, even perishable delicacies. Expressmen rode next to the driver, guarding the 1' x 1' x 2' green strongbox with shotguns, four revolvers, and belts full of ammunition. This didn't discourage robbers, though. Doc Holliday, the Clantons, Sam Bass, Frisco Sue, Black Bart the Po-8, and many others robbed the stages – and almost every robber got some loot. (The most successful stagecoach robbery, from the Oregon and California Stage Co. in 1857, netted \$500,000 in gold dust.) Wells, Fargo tried to stop thefts with armored boxes and stagecoaches, cast silver in 700-lb. blocks, and hid rattlesnakes in the express boxes, but the plunder continued until the last stagecoach run.

In 1869, Wells, Fargo took to the rails, with armed expressmen in armored train cars. They were slightly more successful against train robbers than their predecessors, although a few sticks of dynamite usually persuaded those who wouldn't yield to a hail of bullets.

Despite the holdups, the company's honesty and reliability assumed nearly mythic proportions. Miners swore "by God and by Wells, Fargo." The company eventually branched out into banking operations and formed a private detective organization with the slogan "Wells, Fargo never forgets." They kept records of holdups and sought criminals for decades, if need be.

Or the brigands could board a train and rob it en route, then set the brakes (see sidebar, p. 49) or simply jump off and flee on waiting horses. Some robbers bought tickets; others sneaked on board. Leaping onto the tender as the train pulls away from a platform was a perennial favorite. Robbers had to climb over the tender to the engine before they could force the engineer to stop the train – GMs

should modify jumping and climbing rolls according to weather conditions, train speed, and roughness of the ride (e.g., if the train crosses a switch).

## Getting the Goods

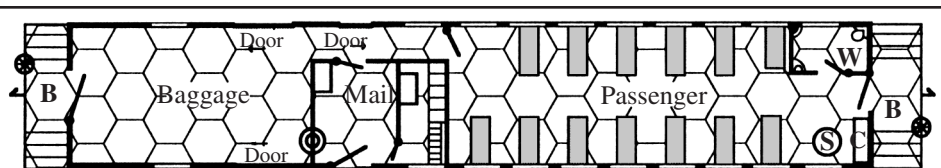
Once the train stopped, robbers usually headed for the express car (between the locomotive and the passenger coaches). It carried a safe that could hold cash, gold dust, valuable packages, registered letters, or any other valuable item the GM wishes.

An expressman with a shotgun guarded the express car. The GM should roll for the expressman's reaction (see pp. B204-205). On a reaction of Very Good or better he gives up immediately; a Poor or worse reaction means he must be forced out. A couple of shots or sticks of dynamite could usually convince an expressman to open up – or stun or injure him so robbers could force their way in. The standard method of opening a safe if the expressman had hidden the keys was to blow the door off – treat as a 1" thick steel wall (see p. B125).

If there were enough robbers, some could frighten the passengers by riding next to the cars, shooting their pistols. This was particularly effective at night, when passengers couldn't see how many outlaws there were. Of course, a bold passenger might risk a pot shot at a horseman.

A train robbery takes about an hour. As trains stopped constantly to take on more water or fuel, to let another train pass, etc., passengers might not realize it's a holdup until it's too late. Passengers who realize it's a robbery may have time to hide their valuables. Expressmen may make up decoy packages of scrap paper, or hide cash and valuables from the safe under cold ashes in the stove.

Safes can contain from \$0 to \$100,000 in cash, averaging \$2,000. The average collection of train passengers has \$2,000 worth of cash, watches, and jewelry. Robberies that meet with resistance or plain bad luck rarely net more than \$100. An average robbery nets \$1,500-\$4,000. A successful robbery nets \$20,000-\$60,000. (The Reno Gang, which pioneered train holdups in 1866, once stole \$96,000 from a train in Indiana; the most successful train robbery on record, in 1934, netted \$2,059,612.)



1 hex = 1 yard

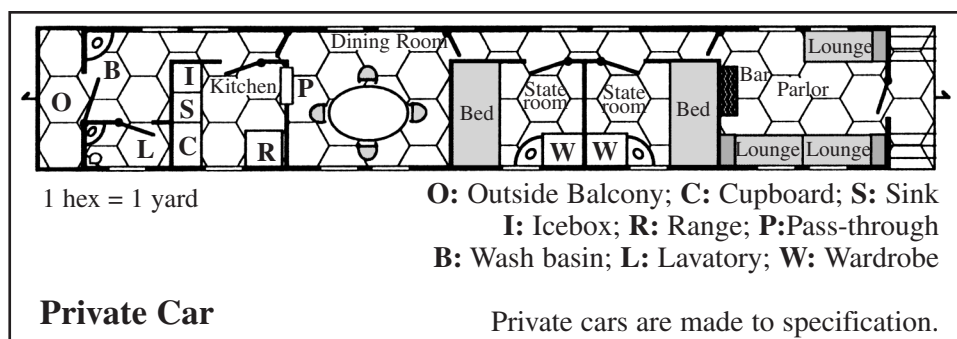
**B:** Hand Brake  
**C:** Coal; **S:** Heating Stove  
**T:** Table; **W:** Watercloset

## "Combine" Car

Seats are for 2nd-class passengers (and smokers).



The GM may surprise outlaws with the type and number of passengers on the train, the number of expressmen (especially for large shipments of valuables), and the strength of the express car and safe. For example, a train may be carrying a platoon of soldiers to their new post – they would present a formidable challenge!



## Leaving the Scene

Clever robbers stop the train where they want it – near their getaway horses. If there are horses on board (by luck or design), the outlaws can climb into the stock car and make their getaway when one sets the brake. Or they can attempt a spectacular – and dangerous – horseback leap from the train. The GM should roll against DX+2 for each horse. Failure indicates the horse falls; both rider and horse take normal falling damage (see p. B131). On a critical failure, the horse breaks a leg or its neck. If the gang plans carefully, fresh horses waiting on the escape route help them evade pursuit.

After a robbery, a train that's still in good working order highballs it to the nearest station or town to telegraph the news and demand a posse. Railroad companies' trained bands of manhunters rush to the robbery site in "horse cars" and ride after the bandits.

## WATERWAYS

The relatively shallow Mississippi and its tributaries were dangerous but essential highways to the West. As the frontiers expanded, boat size grew. The earliest explorers and settlers used Indian boats; by the 1830s, huge steamboats traveled thousands of miles though the interior.

For boat handling, refer to the *Boating* skill on p. B68.

### Bullboats

Popular on the Missouri and other timber-scarce plains rivers, a bullboat was made of buffalo hides stretched over a frame made of willow rods, branches, or a wagonbed, and lashed to the gunwales. The boat had to be waterproofed daily with tallow and ashes and dried each night – they were often used as tents. A boat that wasn't dried and waterproofed properly had a 50% chance of leaking. With care, however, they could last 1,000 miles or more.

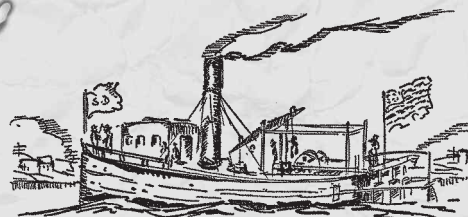
The small round boats were 7' in diameter and carried a third of a ton. Large tub-like bullboats might be 30' in diameter, with a depth of 10' to 12'. Some bullboats were canoe-shaped, 30' long by 12' wide, and carried about three tons with a 2' draft.

Boaters poled or paddled the unwieldy craft (at about Move 2) and could drift downstream as much as a mile in a simple river-crossing. All Boating skill rolls are at -1 for the small craft; -2 for the large canoe-shaped bullboats; and -4 for the tubs.

## BRAKING

Most trains were equipped with hand-brakes – usually applied by turning metal wheels on the roof of each car. Each brake had to be set separately; it was a hazardous job. A 50-car train traveling 20 mph required at least four good brakemen and about 800 feet to stop – 3,000 feet at 40 mph.

Air-brakes, introduced in the 1880s, put all brakes in the engineer's control and reduced stopping distance at 40 mph to less than 600 feet. Primarily used on passenger trains, they were gradually adopted for freight as well.



## THE ERIE CANAL

The Erie Canal connected New York City with the Ohio frontier. Completed in 1825, the 363-mile canal had 83 locks, several stone aqueducts, and innumerable wooden bridges. The 40-foot-wide canal was four feet deep, with a 10-foot towpath alongside.

Before the canal opened, only small boats could ply the rivers through the Appalachians. Portage was a constant necessity. Eastern manufacturers couldn't get their goods to western pioneers, and western farmers couldn't get their produce to eastern cities. Emigrants had to switch many times from cramped boats to cramped wagons.

With the completion of the canal, packet boats towed by horses carried passengers and their luggage night and day, 80 miles in 24 hours. Horse-towed lineboats carried emigrants and their possessions. They didn't run at night, but made 50-60 miles on a good day. Families camped on the deck and slept on their possessions in the hold. Ox-towed rafts crawled along at 1 ½ miles an hour, getting in everyone's way.

The maximum legal speed along the canal was 4 mph. Captains of delayed packet boats cheerfully paid the \$10 speeding fine at the toll collector's office and sped to the next office.

Farmers floated logs up and down the waters, people fished, and landsmen used the 10-foot wide towpath as road and racetrack. Some people lived their whole lives in shantyboats (houseboats), floating peddlers offered their wares, and penny museums attracted visitors from other boats.

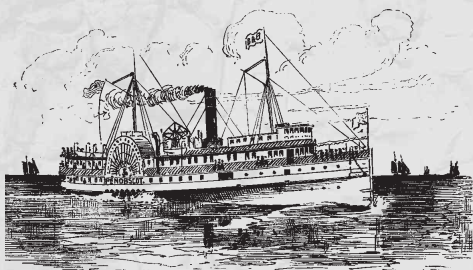


## NATURAL HAZARDS

Generally, the smaller the craft, the more subject it is to river hazards. Submerged snags and rocks could tear the bottom out of a boat in seconds – steamboats, with shallow drafts, generally escaped this fate. Any craft could be surprised by rapids, whirlpools, chutes, bends, and sandbars. Rain or glare might obscure the water surface, so the pilot or steersman can't see. Winter ice floes could break and grind a boat to splinters in seconds.

Steamboats stuck on sandbars may be warped, sparred, or double-tripped out. Warping involves winching the boat forward on a rope tied to a tree or log sunk in the ground. A stuck boat can be sparred – jumped over a bar – by jacking its front up with two thick posts and a winch, then setting the paddles going at full speed. Double-tripping is the last resort. The crew unloads half the cargo so the boat can make it over the sandbar. Once over, the crew unloads the remaining cargo and the ship goes back for the stuff left behind.

A fire in a raft's or keelboat's cookstove, or a steamboat's boiler fire, may get out of hand and set the whole ship ablaze. Steamboat pilots might call for more steam pressure to propel the boat through an obstacle. Since the boilers had no water or pressure gauges, they blew up frequently – and spectacularly.



## ONE DAY ON A KEELBOAT

This sorry account describes one keelboat's day on the Missouri in 1812:

*Started at 6. in the Morning went 1/2 Miles but were stopt by hard head wind and Current . . . started about 1 Mile took the Cordell the Boat swung and went down the River like the Wind in full Speed, leaving all hands on shore, the few which were on Board landed the Boat opposite to our last nights Lodging, our hands came on board made a new start, but night overtook us, got on a sand bar and were very near lost running against a Sawjer had to cross again to the North Side, the other Boat came to close swept by the Current we un-shipped our Rudder, run against a tree and broke her mast, this ended this doleful Day camped at 11. oclock at night distance 1 1/2 Mile . . .*

## Canoes and Pirogues

Travelers, trappers, and even army provisioners used canoes. Bark canoes plied rivers that require portages; dugout canoes – *pirogues* (“peer-oags”) – plied deeper waters. These craft came in many sizes, from a one-man affair, 15’ to 20’ long by 3’ to 4’ wide, to ones 50’ long that carried 40-50 tons of cargo and 30 men. Medium-size and large boats require one man to steer and at least one man to paddle or pole. Experienced polemen can make 25 miles per day against a current. Some pirogues use a square sail in an aft wind. In shallows, a pirogue’s crew drags the boat along.

## BARGES

A variety of large, flat boats navigate the rivers.



## Rafts

Immigrant families and businesses used rafts, which were simply logs lashed together, so they could only go downstream. Commercial rafts usually hauled lumber and might be an acre in size. Two men steered cargo rafts with a 30-foot oar on a pivot.

Rafts are notoriously difficult to manage when something begins to go wrong – all *Boating* skill rolls are at -2. Two-thirds made it to the end of their journeys . . . the rest broke up. Since lumber was in short supply, rafts could be sold at a hefty profit when no longer needed.

## Flatboats

Called “friend of the pioneer,” flatboats were made out of planks and had low sides; they could only float downstream. Many young men started out life by building a small flatboat, loading it with local produce and small livestock, and floating to New Orleans – Abraham Lincoln did this. Most young men walk or ride home after seeing the world, but some become flatboatmen.

Commercial flatboats were 20’ to 100’ long by 12’ to 20’ wide and could hold 40-50 tons. Some were covered for a third or their entire length. They needed 25 hands and had steering oars on fixed pivots. Flatboats tied up at night, preferably at an island.

They typically hauled flour and whiskey. Well-known types of flatboat included the whiskey boats (floating saloons) and the floating “hog ranches” (waterborne brothels). Any town that didn’t want these around simply cut their mooring ropes.

Their peak period was the late 1840s, but some hauled Pittsburgh coal downriver until the 1850s. As late as the 1880s, flatboats sold produce and miscellanies to any customer.

## Keelboats

Keelboats were the most important frontier boats before the steamboat – their heyday was the 1830s, when the steamboats were just hitting their stride.

Keelboats were the only barges to go both up and downstream. Pointed at both ends, 40’ to 75’ long and 7’ to 20’ wide, a keelboat could haul 30 tons. Most had a cabin for goods and passengers (6’ clearance inside).

Keelboats were usually towed by the crew walking along the bank, called “taking the cordelle”; 20-40 men could haul a boat 15 or more miles a day. When the banks were impassable, 16 men poled the boat along. Eight men per side on a narrow walkway along the gunwales “walked” the boat ahead, then rushed back and repeated the procedure. When the water was too deep for poling, six men



rowed from seats in the front. Keelboats could use a square sail when wind and smooth waters permitted. The captain stood on the cabin roof and steered with an oar that extended 10-12' feet beyond the boat on a pivot at the stern.

Many keelboats made regular, scheduled trips up and down stream, stopping each night. The crew slept on the ground, while passengers stayed at a nearby farmhouse.

## STEAMBOATS

The earliest practicable Mississippi steamboat appeared in 1817. They were all but extinct by the late 1880s. During the 1820s-30s, steamboats carried goods upriver and furs downriver. They also ferried soldiers, exploration parties, private passengers, and Indians being removed to reservations. Passenger traffic increased dramatically when the 49ers rushed west.

A passenger steamboat was 250' long by 35' to 40' wide, and could hold 350-400 passengers as well as 500-700 tons of cargo. Steamboats needed 25-30 cords of wood every 24 hours. Stern-wheelers plied the upper Missouri; side-wheelers the lower Missouri and Mississippi. The *Robert E. Lee* sailed from New Orleans to St. Louis in 3 days, 18 hours, 14 minutes, but it usually took about a month to go upriver from St. Louis to Fort Benton. A steamboat that didn't meet with any mishaps could last 8-10 years.

The lowest of a steamboat's four decks holds the boilers (and wood for the boiler fires), the engines, and cargo. The cabin contains both the sumptuous gentlemen's and ladies' salons and staterooms. (The gentlemen's salon is also the dining room; only gentlemen who were related to or invited by a lady passenger could visit the ladies' salon.) The hurricane deck, with the officers' cabins, comes next, and the pilot-house tops everything off. Ornamentation adorns practically every inch of the boat.

A steamboat had a crew of 75-90, including the captain, two mates, two pilots, and four engineers, as well as skilled laborers, kitchen and bar staff, cabin crew, and deck hands (roustabouts).

Pilots – especially on the treacherous Missouri – were well-respected and well-paid (see the *Job Table*, p. 41). Pilots had to learn the river twice: once going up and once going down. The pilot continually changed course to avoid hazards, estimating the current's speed and strength by the way the water swirled around rocks. Ripples indicated deep water, always a relief.

Roustabouts, also called "roosters," carried wood and cargo onto, off, and around the steamboat. They slept on the floor in the hold, and worked all hours of the day and night.

## LONG-DISTANCE COMMUNICATION

### *The Express Mails*

Until the railroad, mail traveled by stagecoach. The Butterfield Overland Mail Company was the first successful mail company, delivering letters and packages to post offices. Until 1896, when the U.S. Postal Service established Rural Free Delivery, anyone expecting mail claimed it at the Post Office. The U.S. government required sealed, stamped envelopes for any letters sent through contracted mail services.



## RIVER PIRATES

The Mississippi and Ohio were infested with pirates in the first third of the century. Some pirates set up "taverns" along the river (as at Cave-in-Rock, Illinois) to entice tired boatmen. The boatmen might have a relaxing evening, being fleeced at cards. Some were simply murdered and robbed.



River pirates were called "boat wreckers." A favorite tactic was to hail the boat from the shore, claiming to be a pilot familiar with the area. (Legitimate pilots were often stationed near dangerous stretches of water – a boat captain would not think it unusual for a stranger to hail the boat from shore.) If the boat took the pirate on, he ran it aground. If the boat refused, the pirate called out helpful misdirections. Other pirates hailed boats for a ride or crept on board, then dug a bit of caulking out of the bottom. If their sabotage was well-timed, the boat began to founder near the pirate lair. Once the boat was grounded or sinking, the pirate band floated out in small boats to save the cargo, leaving the unfortunate boatmen behind.

Hostile Indians could also attack any craft.



## PONY BOB HASLAM

In 1860, Pony Bob Haslam made a stupendous round trip between Virginia City and Smith's Creek. Indians had scared off the horses at the relay stations, so Bob galloped most of the way to Buckland's station on one horse, trying to keep ahead of pursuing Paiutes. He got a fresh horse and a \$50 bonus for riding on at Buckland's station, when the relief rider balked at venturing into the path of hostile Indians. Bob arrived nearly on time at Smith's Creek, then pounded back to Buckland's station, where he was offered \$100 to complete the trip. He did so on the same horse that he rode in on two days earlier. Bob made the 400-mile round trip on fewer than 12 hours of sleep.

The next year, Pony Bob set a speed record while carrying Lincoln's inaugural address partway to California. He took two arrow wounds as he galloped at almost 15 mph along "Ambush Trail." When the news arrived in San Francisco, it had traveled 1,966 miles in 7 days and 17 hours.



## DON'T LEAVE HOME WITHOUT . . .

For details of other TL5 transport (including bicycles and balloons), communications, tools, and medicine, see *GURPS High-Tech*.

The Butterfield Overland Mail Company started delivering the mail in 1858. Its "oxbow route" covered 2,975 miles, from St. Louis and Memphis through Mexico to San Francisco (see map, p. 43). John Butterfield spent \$1,000,000 on 139 relay stations, numerous bridges, and graded roads for his 1,800 animals, 250 coaches, and 800 employees. The Central Overland stage line trundled from Atchison to Sacramento, unwittingly paving the way for the transcontinental railroad that would put it out of business.

### *The Pony Express*

"WANTED – Young, skinny, wiry fellows not over 18. Must be expert riders willing to risk death daily. Orphans preferred."

The first Pony Express riders started simultaneously from St. Louis and San Francisco on April 3, 1860. "The Greatest Enterprise of Modern Times" moved mail in 10 days – less than half the usual time. The original setup included 80 riders and 500 mustangs. Riders earned \$25 per week, could not weigh over 125 lbs., and promised not to swear, get drunk, gamble, treat the mounts cruelly, or interfere with citizens or Indians. They received a Bible, a pair of Colt revolvers, a rifle, a red shirt, blue trousers, and high boots.

The saddlebag had three locked pockets that could be opened at only five points along the route. The fourth pocket held local mail, which could be opened by any station-keeper. Four hundred men staffed 190 stations along the Oregon-California Trail. Riders covered 35-75 miles before passing the saddle bags at one of 25 "home" stations; they changed mounts at the "swing" stations. In addition to occasional Indian ambushes – which the grain-fed ponies could usually outrun – riders faced floods, rockslides, blizzards, bandits, and animal attacks.

The "Pony" charged \$10 per ounce, so letters were written on tissue paper, and newspapers printed special issues on thin paper for Western readers.

Two days after the transcontinental telegraph lines met, the Pony Express folded. In 19 months of operation, the Pony Express carried nearly 35,000 pieces of mail.

### *The Telegraph*

With offices in nearly every railroad station and along the stage lines, Western Union meant swift communication.

The telegraph shot westward from the Missouri River and eastward from California along the Oregon Trail. Three construction crews of 25-30 averaged 12 miles per day – one crew dug 24 holes per mile, another cut and set the poles, and the third strung the wire. Seven hundred beef cattle and 75 ox-drawn supply wagons followed the workers. Indians sometimes cut the lines, keeping the repair crews busy. The lines met in Salt Lake City on October 24, 1861 – eight months ahead of schedule.

The first week, rates were a dollar a word between California and Missouri, despite legislation setting the maximum at \$3 for 10 words. Western Union lowered the rates to \$5 for the first 10 words, and 45 cents per additional word, including the date and message origin.

In 1866, the first permanent telegraph cable spanned the Atlantic, connecting the West with the rest of the world.

Normal telegraph operating speeds were 20 to 25 words per minute; exceptional operators could do 30 to 35 wpm (see the Telegraphy skill, p. B55).



## CHAPTER 4 INDIANS

At the start of the 19th century, some one million Indians inhabited North America, speaking more than 300 languages and dialects. Expert horsemen roamed the Great Plains, hunting buffalo. The arid Southwest supported farmers and raiders. Gatherers in the Great Basin lived on roots, rabbits, and grasshoppers. The Pacific Northwest cultures measured wealth with gifts. And in the eastern woodlands, palisaded villages housed farmers and hunters.





*Indian: Eastern to Indian U.S. Government*

Cherokee Outlet

Cherokee and Arapaho

Great County

INDIAN

No, shown are the many Indian tribes of the Pacific Coast that became extinct through disease and warfare, or that were integrated into other tribes. Of the Mission Indians of Southern California, only those tribes that retained their tribal identity are shown. Among those now extinct are the Cupeno, Fernandeno, Gabrielino, and Iuano.

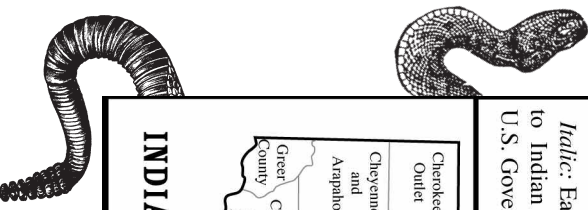
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Cherokee Outlet

Cherokee and Arapaho

Great County

INDIAN



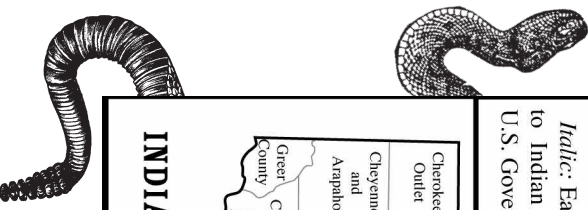
*Indian: Eastern to Indian U.S. Government*

Cherokee Outlet

Cherokee and Arapaho

Great County

INDIAN





Indians have straight, coarse, black hair, brown or black eyes, and prominent cheekbones. Skin color ranges from very light to deep reddish brown.

Nomadic Indians moved and camped in groups, called *bands*. Each band belonged to a tribe, whose members shared common customs and language. Many tribal names characterized appearance – Blackfoot, Flathead, and Nez Percé (Pierced Nose). Often, the whites' name for a tribe meant "enemy" or "snake" in another tribe's language. Most tribes called themselves "human beings" or "The People."

Whites saw the red man as an obstacle. By the end of the century, disease, conquest, and oppression had killed 3/4 of the Indian population. Most of the survivors lived on reservations, having lost 98% of their former territory.

This chapter deals primarily with the archetypal Plains Indians, whose tipis, warbonnets, and Indian ponies are synonymous with the West. Other tribes are mentioned for reference.

## THE PLAINS INDIANS

Great Plains horsemen hunted and raided over the grasslands. Their cultures revolved around the horse and the buffalo. Plains Indians fought the longest and hardest against white incursions.

In the 17th and 18th centuries, many tribes adopted the horse and migrated onto the Plains to hunt the buffalo. Tribes and customs mingled, and by the 19th century most Plains tribes shared a common culture suited to the grasslands. The buffalo provided food, clothing, and shelter; stands of willows and cottonwoods provided firewood and plant materials.

The Plains tribes lived in bands of 50-300. Each band had societies – much like fraternities or sororities – whose members shared ceremonial, social, or military duties. There were dance societies, Dreamer societies (whose members have had similar visions), and many others. Warrior societies vied to police the band, maintaining order during hunts and village moves.

Most Plains warriors counted coup, took scalps, and raided for horses (see *Plains Warfare*, p. 57). They fought fiercely and had a strong Code of Honor (p. 31).

Although whites' tales of torture abound, Plains warriors killed swiftly and cleanly. Most captives were kept as slaves or adopted into the tribe; rarely, a few were tortured for vengeance or in religious ceremonies.

The Plains Indian religion revolved around the interconnection of all things, and the importance of supernatural helpers who provide aid. Most Plains tribes celebrated the midsummer Sun Dance to protect the tribe and seek favors from the gods (see sidebar, pp. 68-69). Young warriors sought visions and magical powers through fasting and self-torture (see *Indian Magic*, pp. 67-79).

## THE HUNT

To live comfortably, a Plains Indian needed at least four pounds of meat each day. A typical band of 100 Indians had five to 10 principal hunters who killed four deer or one elk each day, or two buffalo each week. Porcupines, raccoons, beavers, rabbits, and birds supplemented the big game. Extra meat became pemmican or jerky.

## UNITED STATES INDIAN POLICY

The 1787 Northwest Ordinance adopted by Congress stated that "the utmost good faith shall always be observed towards the Indians; their lands and property shall never be taken from them without their consent . . ."

The Indian Removal Act of 1830, designed to move eastern Indians west of the Mississippi, was the first major departure from this policy. The Trade and Intercourse Act of 1834 created Indian Territory, between the Red and Missouri rivers, as a "permanent" province for Indian tribes.

In 1871, the Act of March 3 completed the shift, declaring that "hereafter no Indian nation or tribe" would be considered "an independent power with whom the United States may contract by treaty." The Dawes General Allotment Act of 1887 divided the reservations into parcels, 160 acres per Indian, and opened the "surplus" to homesteaders. Indians lost more than half of the 138 million acres previously reserved for them.

## RESERVATION LIFE

Most Indian reservations were beautiful but inhospitable. None were large enough to support the Indians by hunting and gathering. Plains warriors found reservation life appalling. The agricultural techniques taught by the whites were more suited to the temperate eastern lands than to the arid Plains. Supplemental rations and annuities provided by the government were often late or neglected entirely, and always of poor quality. One shipment included trousers, all one size (extra-large) – the Indians cut the seats out to wear them as leggings.

Issue day came once every week or two. The Indians gathered at the post to receive their rations, and spent the day feasting and gambling. They rode after loose beef cattle, shooting them in a pathetic parody of the buffalo hunt. By the end of the day, many families went home empty-handed, their supplies squandered.

## INDIAN CLICHÉS

Indians were neither the "noble savages" nor stupid children of popular 19th-century belief. Nor were they all "bloodthirsty savages" or "lazy, drunken good-for-nothings." But dime novels and Wild West shows presented images of Indians which persist to this day.

*Continued on next page . . .*



## INDIAN CLICHÉS (CONTINUED)

**Feather Bonnets:** Although many Plains tribes used war bonnets, they were rarely worn except in ceremonies. With each eagle feather representing a *coup* or honorable deed, a warrior wearing a bonnet trailing dozens of feathers invited special attention from the enemy. When raiding or warring, most contented themselves with a feather or two. Some Indians, captivated by the American portrayal of their people, took to wearing full ceremonial garb whenever going into town.

**"How!"** This is the "traditional" greeting of Hollywood Indians. Historically, the closest things to it are the "How do?" of American greeting, and the Lakota (Sioux) word for "yes" (*hau*). In cinematic campaigns, GMs may let Indians say "How!" whenever they like.

**Peace Pipes:** Also known as *calumets*, these ceremonial pipes harness the magical powers of tobacco. Inhaling smoke from the pipe binds a speaker to tell the truth and seals vows and promises. A man who breaks his word or tells a lie after smoking, as Custer did, invites the wrath of the spirits.

**Scalping:** Although a few tribes prized enemy scalps before the coming of the white man, bounties placed on scalps by European governments encouraged the custom. When governments later paid bounties for Indian scalps, white men adopted the practice. Even Apaches, with their deep aversion to contact with the dead, took to claiming scalps in revenge for the many Apache scalps proudly displayed by Mexicans and Anglos.

**Smoke Signals:** Indians used smoke and mirrors, or simply waved a buffalo robe, to signal to one another. Such signals were usually short, meaning "buffalo discovered" or "enemy approaching." They worked best on the Plains, where few things obstructed vision. Animal calls work in any environment.

**Tomahawks:** Traditional Indian war hatchets were made of stone with wooden handles. They were used in battle and to lift scalps. European-manufactured steel tomahawks ("trade" tomahawks) quickly replaced them. It was an Indian custom to bury a tomahawk after reaching peace with an enemy . . . thus the term "to bury the hatchet."

**War Paint:** Warriors preparing for raiding or battle painted themselves with designs which symbolize past deeds and provide magical protection. A hand print on chest or war pony symbolized an enemy killed in hand-to-hand combat. Protective designs were usually received from a medicine man or in a vision.

## Hunting Methods

The Indians used traps, particularly deadfalls, to catch all types of animals. They clubbed or snared birds and shot squirrels and prairie dogs. Bands of boys surrounded rabbit colonies and threw short heavy clubs called "rabbit sticks." Beavers and raccoons were smoked from their lairs and clubbed. Indians also hunted wolves, coyotes, badgers, skunks, and muskrats.

Indians fished for trout with willow poles and bone hooks baited with grasshoppers, or seined in rapid streams with pierced buffalo hides.

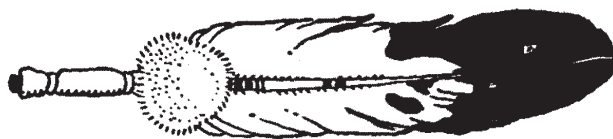
Men hunted larger game in pairs or small groups. Stealth was as important as accurate shooting. Hunters in wolf or deerskin disguises approached from downwind, shooting as many arrows as they could while the surprised animals fled. They hunted on foot, using horses as pack animals, except when pursuing buffalo. When buffalo or antelope herds were caught in deep snow, hunters on snowshoes made quick work of the trapped animals.

An eagle hunt was particularly sacred. Hidden in a covered pit, the hunter waited for an eagle to respond to the lure. When the bird alighted, the warrior jumped up, grabbed the eagle by the feet, and broke its neck. The feathers decorated shields, lances, and warbonnets – each symbolizing a coup or honorable deed.

The successful hunter needed a deep understanding of animals and of the supernatural. Animal spirits required appropriate ceremonies before the animals would sacrifice themselves for the good of the Indian. Prior to hunting, the hunter smoked a pipe and appealed to the animal spirits for permission to take one of their members. At the kill, he offered thanks, and at the meal he put aside a piece of meat for the animal's spirit. Dances ensured that the spirits of the animals taken by the tribe would return.

## Buffalo Hunts

Buffalo hunts were usually tribal affairs, held in summer and the start of winter.



Most hunters rode bareback and wore nothing but a breechcloth. They approached the herd from downwind, getting as close as possible. At a signal, they charged forward, stampeding the buffalo. Each hunter chose an animal and rode up on its right side from the rear. They shot for the vitals, aiming between the hip and the last rib (-3 to hit, triple damage). At such close range, arrows could bury themselves completely in the animal. Some passed all the way through, occasionally bringing down a second animal. Well-trained ponies swerved away as soon as they heard the bow twang – even so, some were gored.

Other times, hunters surrounded the herd, then raced their ponies forward on the signal. The bulls forced cows and calves into the center of the herd and ran around the margin. Occasionally they became so bewildered they stopped running and were easy to kill.

Men, women, and children helped stampede herds over cliff edges. They formed two lines which converged at the cliff. A Buffalo Caller, disguised in a buffalo skin, mimicked a buffalo to entice the herd leaders into the trap. (This requires a successful roll against Animal Handling-5.) Once the buffalo were well within the hunters' V, Indians farthest from the cliff leapt up and waved blankets. The frightened buffalo stampeded toward the apex, driving those in front over the cliff.



# PLAINS WARFARE

Indians avoided pitched battles, which cost too many lives. They preferred surprise attacks, ambushes, and retaliatory raids. Daring men with fast horses could decoy the enemy into a trap.

Before leading a war or raiding party, warriors consulted their Guardian Spirits or medicine men to determine the best time and place for the raid (see *Medicine for the Hunt and for Warfare*, p. 74). Warriors invited to join the party usually agreed if the leader was known for successful raids.

A War Dance was held the night the party departed. Between dances and songs, each warrior recited his coups. Before dawn, the warriors gathered their equipment and horses and quietly left the village. Most parties included a medicine man to foresee events and heal the wounded. Women might go on raids expected to be easy, to fire arrows from the fringes of the battle.

The goal of most raids was vengeance or theft. Individual raiders strove to gain prestige. The most successful raids resulted in much honor and booty for the raiders, and disgrace and shame for the enemy.

Successful parties sent someone ahead to inform the tribe, while they prepared themselves and their horses in war garb and paint. The village greeted the triumphant party with shouts, feasting, and dancing.

Unsuccessful parties rarely announced their return. At night, they entered the camp one by one, their faces painted black and their horses' tails shaved. If many warriors failed to return, the camp wailed and mourned.

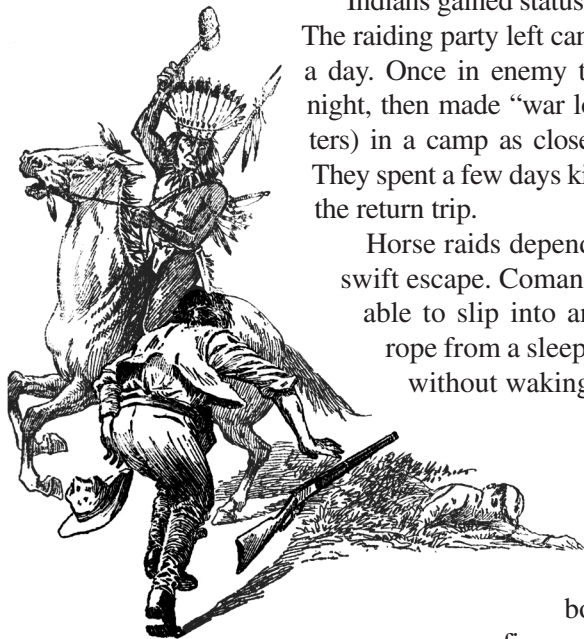
## Scalp Raids

Scalps raids were for vengeance. Before departing, the warriors offered sacrifices and paraded the camp in full war regalia – war paint, eagle feathers, coup sticks, shields, and lances. If the raid was successful, the whole village celebrated with a Scalp or Victory Dance and the scalps were displayed on decorated poles. The warriors danced and recounted their deeds.

## Horse Raids

Indians gained status and wealth by stealing horses. The raiding party left camp on foot, averaging 25 miles a day. Once in enemy territory, they traveled only at night, then made “war lodges” (temporary brush shelters) in a camp as close to the enemy as they dared. They spent a few days killing enough game for food on the return trip.

Horse raids depended on stealth, surprise, and a swift escape. Comanches were renowned raiders – able to slip into an enemy camp, cut a horse's rope from a sleeping man's wrist, and get away without waking a soul.



## INDIAN WEAPONS

Indians used lances, tomahawks, war clubs, bows, and shields. They used firearms when they could get ammunition, but preferred the bow for hunting.

## COUNTING COUP

A *coup* (French meaning “strike”) is a publicly recognized deed which brings honor to the warrior. Striking a live enemy without harming him requires great courage, and is the highest form of coup a warrior could perform. Many Indians carried coup sticks decorated with eagle feathers for striking enemies on the battlefield.

Coup rules vary among tribes. When a warrior killed an enemy, other warriors could touch the body and claim a coup. Comanches recognized a second coup on the same enemy. The Cheyennes allowed three coups, the Arapaho four.

The braver the deed, the more honorable the coup. Stealing an enemy's weapon or horse was especially honored. Most tribes considered counting coup more important than killing.

A warrior proclaimed his coups through decorations on his body, clothes, horse and possessions. Falsely claiming a coup brings bad luck.

The GM should award a character point for each coup. To be recognized by the tribe (and the GM), the coup must be achieved at great risk.

## THE MAGIC OF INDIAN NAMES

Indian names hold great magical power. An Indian's personal name usually commemorated an event or honored a relative. For good luck and long life, a newborn received a second name from a medicine man – or, in Sioux society, a *winkte* (see *Berdaches*, p. 59). Names derived from false deeds brought bad luck.

Nicknames were usually used instead of personal names. An Indian addressed by his personal name must grant any request. A warrior thus called by a fallen comrade must rescue him or die defending him.

Indians could change their names to commemorate an event or to recover from illness by assuming a stronger name. Returns-Again, a Hunkpapa Sioux, was once approached by a lone buffalo bull bellowing four names over and over. Understanding that the bull was offering him a new name, Returns-Again chose the first one. Years later, he bestowed his name on his son in honor of his first coup. Thus a Sioux warrior named “Slow” became Tatanka Iyotake – Sitting Bull.

Many tribes forbade speaking the names of the dead for fear of attracting ghosts. This taboo generally applied for several years.

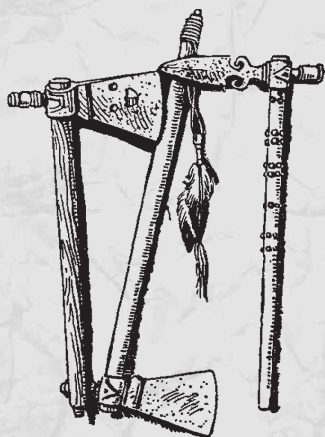


## SCALPING

Indians sometimes took scalps as proof of their deeds, but a scalped warrior's soul could not rest until his scalp was returned or replaced with an enemy's.

Tribal custom dictated the size of the scalp taken. Pueblo Indians took only a small circle from the crown of the head (it stretched greatly when prepared). Comanches and other Plains Indians preferred to take the whole scalp. The scalper cuts a circle with his knife, grasps the hair, and yanks. If he makes his ST roll, the scalp comes free – otherwise he needs a knife to separate scalp from skull.

Scalping does 1 point of damage for each inch in diameter of skin taken.



## PREPARING THE SCALP

As soon as convenient, the warrior prayed to the spirits and ceremonially prepared the scalp. He shaved the flesh from the skin, stretched the scalp over a willow hoop, and sewed it in place. He combed and oiled the hair, attached the willow hoop to a pole in the ground, and left it to dry. The scalp would later be displayed or used to decorate the warrior's possessions.

## SURVIVING A SCALPING

Anyone who is not already dead when scalped may survive the procedure. Immediate dangers include bleeding to death (see p. B130) while unconscious or playing dead, or the enemy discovering the victim still lives. Surviving that, the victim is still in danger of infection (see p. B134). Medical attention reduces the chances of bleeding and infection, and aids recovery.

A scalping victim loses one or two levels of Appearance, depending on the amount of scalp taken. The scalped area bears a permanently hairless scar. See p. C184.

## Lances

The typical Indian lance was a slender spear about 7 feet long, tipped with iron or steel when available. (Flaked stone or carved mahogany points predate iron.)

Indians used lances in melee combat, rarely throwing them (use the same stats for spear, p. B206). When lancing from horseback, a warrior would thrust underhand – overarm thrusts could spook the horse or break the point on the enemy's bones. Only the bravest warriors chose the lance. They traditionally vowed never to retreat (a Great Vow, -15 points). Many lances had powers granted by the spirits.

## Tomahawks and War Clubs

Western-manufactured trade tomahawks were made of iron and could be used as either small maces or axes, depending on their edges (see *Weapon Table*, pp. 89-90). They could also be thrown. Indians and white men alike found them useful as tools and as weapons. Some tomahawks were spiked like a small fireman's axe and could be used for piercing skulls (impaling damage) or digging holes.

Traditional stone axes and wooden or bone clubs may be treated as small maces in melee, doing only crushing damage. The Comanche war club, or battle axe, is a 2-lb. flint stone attached to a wooden handle a little more than a foot in length. Each end of the stone thins to a rough edge. (See *small mace* statistics, p. B206.)

Other tribes make clubs of stone, wood, antlers, bone, and other materials. Some are spiked or knobbed. Many are carved, painted, or decorated with feathers and scalp fringes.

Pipe tomahawks are ceremonial objects which functioned as both pipe and weapon, and were highly prized by Indians. The tomahawk became more ceremonial toward the end of the century – by the time of the battle at Little Bighorn, it was no longer commonly used in warfare.

## Firearms

A musket shoots farther than even the most powerful bow, but it's slow. Repeating firearms are better, but the Indians lacked the skills or equipment to maintain them. They faced chronic ammunition shortages.

Many preferred the Indian Musket to caplock guns (see p. 84). They made their own flints and bullets, and muskets are easier to reload on a running horse. Slapping the butt jars some of the charge into the priming pan for firing. Indians decorated their guns as they did other weapons.

## Bows and Arrows

Most Indian bows were single-curved short bows, 3-4 feet long (see *Weapon Table*, p. 89). Warriors on foot preferred the slightly larger regular bow (see p. B207 for stats).

Bows made of certain woods, such as mulberry or ash, were particularly prized for their magical powers. Each was worth a good pony.

Sinew-backed or "compound" bows were made of laboriously shaped strips of buffalo, elk, or mountain-sheep horn fitted together, glued, and wrapped. They were worth 6-20 ponies apiece, and added +1 to effective skill. (They shouldn't be confused with modern compound bows, which utilize cables and pulleys to increase accuracy and power.)

Bowstrings were sinews from the back of a deer leg or a buffalo shoulder, split and twisted into cord. Buckskin or rawhide wrist guards protected the bowman.



Indian warriors made arrows of wood or reed and painted them with identifying marks. Tips were fire-hardened wood, chipped flint, or iron.

A warrior typically carried 30-40 arrows in his quiver – some held up to 100. The fanciest quivers and bow cases were mountain lion skins with their tails left on as decoration. A traveler slung the quiver over his back with the feathered arrow shafts protruding above his right shoulder. In battle, the warrior shifted the quiver under the left armpit for easier reach.

*Poisoned arrows* – Some Indians used snake or spider venom, or “medicine” ritually prepared from such things as deer gall bladders and rotting skunk corpses. These don’t cause extra damage, but may lead to illness. The victim rolls against HT, modified by -1 for every 2 hits taken from the arrow wound. Failure indicates infection, as per a spike envenomed with dung (see p. B134).

*Flaming arrows* – Flaming arrows were made by wrapping oil- or fat-soaked cloth or grasses around the shaft just behind the arrowhead. They are -2 to skill. A flaming arrow does ordinary damage plus 1 point for the flame. The chance of the flame spreading depends on what the arrow strikes (see pp. B129-130).

### Shields and Armor

The Sioux and other Plains Indians used shields of thickened buffalo hide. All war shields were thought to grant magical protection. Medicine men constructed and decorated them according to a ritual revealed in a vision (see *Indian Magic*, pp. 67-79). A hoop of light wood large enough to cover the chest and reinforced with four sticks provided the framework. Boiling and drying the hide thickened and hardened it. (PD 2, plus any magical bonuses. With the optional shield damage rules, p. B120, the shield has DR 3 and Damage of 5/30.)

Comanche shields were of layered hide stuffed with feathers, hair, or paper. (Pioneers were amazed at the Comanche interest in books.) Nearly any angled blade or missile must penetrate so many levels of material it will never reach the warrior. Even bullets from smoothbore weapons aren’t likely to penetrate. (PD 3, plus any magical bonuses. DR 6 and Damage 10/40.)

Many Indian tribes had armor as well. Some Indians used a Mexican saddle and bull’s hide armor imitating the Spanish morion and cuirass (PD 2, DR 2, torso only). The Five Civilized Tribes wore cane breastplates (PD 2, DR 2, protects torso from the front only). Tribes of the Columbia Plateau and Northern California preferred armor made of wooden slats over an elkskin undershirt (PD 2, DR 3, torso only). Armor was rarely magical, however; most horse warriors rely instead on speed, agility, and their shields.

## THE SIOUX

The Sioux dominated the Northern Plains, where the buffalo thrived. They made few alliances (none of them lasting) and many enemies. Their Indian ponies and repeating rifles made them “the finest cavalry in the world.”

The Sioux Nation had three groups – the Dakotas, Nakotas, and Lakotas. Popular nomenclature equates “Sioux” with the Lakotas, also known as Teton Sioux, Plains Sioux, or Western Sioux. The white man called the Dakotas “Santee Sioux” and the Nakotas “Yankton Sioux.” Although each group was autonomous and had its own leaders, they assembled in summer to hold council and celebrate the Sun Dance.

Sioux honored bravery, generosity, and wisdom. They expected warriors to bear pain well, and to show emotional reserve under stress.

## SAMPLE INDIAN NAMES

### SIoux

Capa-Tanka, Big Beaver  
Huhuseca-ska, White Bone  
Mato-Nazin, Standing Bear  
Tasunke-Ciqala, Little Horse  
Tatanka-Ptecila, Short Bull  
Wambli-Waste, Good Eagle  
Wicapi, Star

### KIOWA

Apiatan, Wooden Lance  
Guwekondgieh, Black Wolf

### HOPI

Lololomai, Very Good  
Tawakwaptiwa, Sun-Down-Shining



## BERDACHES AND CONTRARIES

Many Plains tribes conferred a special status on effeminate males – the *berdache* (a French term) or, in the Sioux bands, *winkte*. The Sioux believed that Hanwi, the Moon spirit, appeared to a boy during puberty and offered him the choice of a bow and a woman’s pack strap. If the boy hesitated to reach for the bow, he became a berdache. Berdaches dress like women and cannot join warrior societies. There is rarely a Social Stigma. A berdache may join women’s societies and do beading and other women’s work, serve as a matchmaker or a nurse, or become a medicine man. Some tribes accept berdaches as second wives – not for sex, but to perform women’s chores. Alternately, a “manly-hearted woman” may join in the hunt; one, Woman Chief, became a warrior after killing three Blackfoot raiders, and married four wives.

The *Contraries* were a society of Cheyenne warriors, chosen by the Thunder Spirit, who attended rituals doing many things in reverse – walking backward with their weapons reversed, saying “goodbye” for “hello,” “washing” themselves with handfuls of dust, etc. Some are even said to have ridden backward into battle.



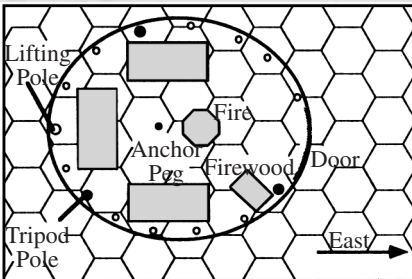
## THE SIOUX NATION

The Dakotas, or Santee Sioux, include the Mdewkanton, Wahpeton, Wahpekute, and Sisseton. The Nakotas, or Yankton Sioux, include the Yankton proper and the Yanktonai.

The Lakotas, or Teton Sioux, have seven major divisions. There are the Ogla-las, or "Scatter One's Own"; the Sican-gus, or "Burnt Thighs" (Brules); the Ooh-enonpas, "Two Boilings" or "Two Kettles"; the Miniconjous, "Those Who Plant by the Stream"; the Hunkpapas, "Those Who Camp at the Entrance"; the Sihas-apas, "Black Feet"; and the Itazipchos, "Without Bows," called "Sans Arcs" by the French.

All this may cause confusion among whites, but the Indians have no trouble with it.

## TYPICAL TIPI FLOORPLAN



The tripod poles provide frame support. The lifting pole is used to position the tipi's buffalo-hide cover. On windy days, a rawhide tie anchors the apex of the tipi to the anchor peg. The bottom edge of the hide cover may be raised in warm weather. Other furnishings include back rests and personal items.

## ENTERTAINMENT

The Sioux loved to gamble, and almost every game or sport involved betting. Dances celebrated manly prowess and womanly virtue. Men and women attended their own dances, rarely dancing together. The Night Dance, a formal gathering and feast, offered mixed dancing.

Sioux played drums, rattles, flutes, and whistles. Most music involved drumming and singing. Magical powers were associated with flutes, and only medicine men made them, though anyone taught the proper tune could use their magic.

## Villages

Each band had its favorite campsites. Level woodlands surrounded by bluffs or ridges were best. They camped on the high plains only for the Sun Dance, with their tipis in a huge circle open to the east.

Warriors raided during the summer. Women gathered vegetables and painted robes. When someone spotted a buffalo herd, the headmen organized a hunt.

In autumn, each band went its own way. Some hunted together while the women gathered vegetables and nuts and dry meat for winter.

The Sioux wintered in the Black Hills forests from December until March or April. Plentiful meat meant winter survival. In severe winters, they resorted to eating acorns, horses, and hide scrapings.

In springtime, Indians made sugar. Many moved into wigwams – domed stick-frame bark or hide huts – and made tipis from buffalo hides. Societies held dances, and a few young men sought visions.

When moving camp, one warrior society kept order. Scouts led; the Wakincuzas – headmen and elders – carried the fire. The warriors discouraged stragglers. The band could cover 25 miles in a day, or more than 50 if pressed. At the new camp, women set the tipis in the order of march, doorways facing east.

## Societies

Sioux warrior societies (*Akicitas*) included the Brave Hearts and Kit Foxes. They held dances and feasts, and performed ceremonial duties. The band elected one society as police, and chose another whenever displeased.

An entire society rarely went to battle – members joined war parties individually or in small groups. Each warrior was required to uphold his society's reputation. The bravest become leaders. Most *Akicitas* had 12 officers – two pipe bearers, two drummers, four lancers, two rattlers, and two whippers. The pipe bearers mediated between members. The whip bearers disciplined members who broke the society's rules. The lancers carried lances into battle.

Of the non-warrior societies, the *Nacas* were most important. Members included elders and former chiefs, and guided the bands and the *Akicitas* in all major decisions.

## THE COMANCHE

Comanches raided from the southern Plains. The Staked Plains (Llano Estacado) tableland was the western limit of Comancheria. New Mexico settlements were prime targets. The Big Bend wasteland to the south protected the Indians from Mexicans but not vice versa.

Unlike other Plains Indians, the Comanche had no police, tribal councils, or Sun Dances. Each band had a peace chief, who settled disputes and decided when the band will move or hunt. War chiefs organized raids and led the band in times of danger.

Comanches believed in natural spirits, but did not practice self-torture in their vision quests.

Warriors counted coup for prestige and honor. Stealing guarded horses was the ultimate achievement, rescuing fallen comrades the highest duty. Successful war parties received elaborate victory dances – including the Scalp Dance when appropriate.

Canyons and arroyos protected villages from weather and enemies. Tipis surrounded each chief's lodge in rows, or followed a rectangular grid. Women made food, tanned hides, and sewed tipis and clothing. Men hunted, raided, or crafted



weapons. When the head peace chief said it was time to move, a herald rode through the camp describing the new location. Women struck camp hurriedly the next morning, eager to obtain a good site in the new camp. Men and boys drove the horses and hunted along the way.

Allied tribes included the Kiowa (since 1790) and the Cheyenne (from 1840). The Wichita shared trade and peaceful relations with the Comanche. The Apache warred almost constantly with the Comanche until 1875. Comanches despised the Tonkawa and other Texas tribes for their cannibalism.

## THE SOUTHWESTERN DESERT TRIBES

The Southwestern summer rains supported four agricultural tribes – the Yumans, O’odham, Tohono O’odham, and Pueblo Indians. Typical desert crops included maize, beans, melons, pumpkins, and wheat.

Navajo and Apache raiders roamed the Colorado Plateau, and nomadic hunters inhabited southwestern Texas and northern Mexico. The inhospitable terrain discouraged white settlement, and the Indians of the Southwest retained most of their tribal lands.

### YUMAN TRIBES

Yuman Indians lived along permanent rivers, fishing, hunting small game, and gathering wild fruits and seeds. Spring floods silted their small fields; starvation was rare. Yuman families lived in brush shelters or sand-covered houses. Each tribe encompassed loosely organized bands.

Yuman tribes included the Yuma, Mojave, Havasupai, Walapai, Yavapai, Cocopa, and Maricopa. The Maricopa often allied with the O’odham against the Mojave and Yuma; the Yavapai frequently raided with western Apache. Yuma bands often warred with the Cocopa, but traded with other neighbors. The Havasupai were peaceful.

### O’ODHAM AND TOHONO O’ODHAM

O’odham (Pima) Indians farmed in the river valleys, irrigating their farms with a series of canals and dams left by the Hohokam (“Vanished Ones”). Hunting and gathering supported them one year in five when drought destroyed the crops.

O’odhams lived in pit houses – excavated living rooms with sapling and mud roofs. Village chiefs elected a tribal chief. The O’odham culture was similar to Mexican and Central American village cultures, including snakes and birds as religious figures.

The Tohono O’odham (Papago) inhabited harsher areas of the desert and supplemented their meager crops with wild foods. They made saguaro cactus jam, candy, syrup, and wine. In winter months, they moved to the hills, where water supplies were more permanent.

In summer, the Tohono O’odham lived by their fields. They depended on flash-floods for irrigation, and built reservoirs, ditches, and dikes. In very dry summers, only beans grew – hence their old name “Papago,” meaning “Bean People.”

### ANIMALS

The Sioux kept two kinds of dogs – a large breed, similar to coyotes, for work; and a smaller type for eating. The working dogs offered protection, and served as warning system and pack animals (Sioux called the horse “medicine dog,” Comanches named it “God dog,” and Sarsis called it “seven dogs”). Few adults cared for them as they would a favorite horse, although children often made pets of the puppies.

A warrior usually picketed his favorite horse near his tipi. He pampered, groomed, and fed it, and guarded it from raiders. The rest of the herd grazed on the plains, to be caught and ridden at need.

Boys loved to capture young hawks, coyotes, skunks, and badgers, but most escaped when full grown. Young eagles and hawks were kept until autumn, then killed for their feathers. They were never trained for falconry. Adults occasionally kept talking crows as pets.

### WARFARE

The Sioux warred to capture enemy property (especially horses), to expand their territory, and to retaliate against previous attacks. Despite their warlike reputation, they were attacked nearly as often as they warred on their enemies. Sioux villages were always ready for siege, safe only during blizzards and other bad weather.

The Sioux Nation made few alliances, and no long-lasting ones. Their traditional tribal enemies included the Pawnees and Kiowas.

Sioux warriors took captives in raids, usually adopting the children. A captured woman generally became her captor’s wife. If she refused, she was returned to her people. Few men were taken captive; most would rather die.

### THE COMANCHE LANGUAGE

The Comanches dominated trade as well as hunting in the southern Plains. Indian gatherings of more than one tribe generally used the Comanche tongue. Consequently, Comanches rarely bothered to learn other languages or the Plains sign language.

### “SNAKES”

The Plains Indian Sign Language gesture for “Comanches” is made by holding the right hand palm downward, forearm across the front of the body, and moving it to the right with a wiggling motion. It means “Snake Going Backward,” the common name for a Comanche.



## THE PUEBLO “PLACE OF EMERGENCE”

Pueblo Indians believed in a place called *sipapu*, a sacred spot where their ancestors entered this world from a previous, underground world. Each tribe has its own place of emergence, the center of its cosmos. The Tewan *sipapu* is a lake in Colorado. The Zuni *sipapu* is on the edge of their ancient village. Harmony and control must reign around the *sipapu*. If evil thoughts or errors in rituals intrude, the spirits will withhold the blessings of life.

Among the apartments of the pueblos are ceremonial subterranean chambers called *kivas*. Used for sacred ceremonies, a kiva is entered through a hole in the domed roof. Another hole in the floor symbolically represents the *sipapu*.



## THE ANASAZI

The Anasazi people – “Ancient Ones” in the Navajo language – lived among the high mesas of the Southwest. They were accomplished potters, builders, and farmers. The Anasazi terraced their fields and built extensive irrigation systems. They invented pueblo architecture. Pueblo Bonito in Chaco Canyon has five stories and 800 rooms.

Sometime around 1000 A.D., the Anasazi moved from mesa-top pueblos to newly built cliff dwellings, including Cliff Palace in Mesa Verde and Mummy Cave in Canyon de Chelly. Three centuries later, drought, or invaders, or inter-pueblo fighting emptied these great communities. The Anasazi established new, smaller pueblos, and passed their culture down to their descendants – the Pueblo Indians.

Tohono O’odham villages were made up of extended families, each family led by the oldest active male. Their wattle-and-daub houses were widely spaced. Tradition and language bound the tribe; related villages maintained contact. The men met nightly to resolve local problems. The medicine man – the “keeper of the smoke” – led communal ceremonies. The Tohono O’odham sought magical powers through singing, visions, and intoxication.

O’odham Indians maintained friendly relations with whites. Forty-niners were freely offered food and escorted through Apache territory. The River Pima also supplied much of the food for the U.S. Army during the western campaigns of the Civil War. O’odham warriors scouted for the U.S. Army, working against their Tribal Enemy, the Apache.

Living in more remote areas than their cousins, the Tohono O’odham had little contact with whites.

## PUEBLO INDIANS

Pueblo (Spanish for village) refers to the adobe or stone houses of the Southwest and the Indians who inhabited them. Many were abandoned because of disease or warfare; 30 or so remained inhabited at the beginning of the 19th century.

Pueblo tribes shared cultural traits, although their languages were mutually unintelligible. Primarily farmers, some Pueblo Indians hunted deer and antelope in the mountains; some hunted buffalo on the Staked Plains. All Pueblos held rabbit hunts and gather wild plants.

Each family had several rooms in the communal building. The principal unit of Pueblo society was a clan, which was as important as the family. Clan kinship was based on a totemic animal and passed on through the mother. Marriage within a clan was forbidden – a man always belonged to a different clan than his wife and children.

Religion was a communal affair that ensured the order of the universe. Each clan had a secret society responsible for specific ceremonies; rituals ensured tribal welfare. The society heads governed the pueblo.

Nearly all Pueblos shared the Kachina cult. Kachinas are ancestral spirits that brought rain and fertility. During festivals, the priests became the Kachinas by donning their ogre, demon, animal, or clown masks. The Mudheads, who parody and ridicule Pueblo society, are the best-known kachina clowns.

Pueblo tribes include the Hopi, Zuni, Keres, Tewa, Tiwa, and Towa. Most of their pueblos bear Spanish names – Taos, Isleta, San Juan, San Ildefonso, Santa Domingo, and so on.

## NOMADS OF THE SOUTHWEST

Once of the same people, the Navajo and Apache shared religious beliefs and language. The Navajo call themselves “Din-eh(!!!)é” – “The People.” (They cannot say “Navajo,” since they have no equivalent “v” sound; the word comes from the Tewa word “Navahuu,” meaning “cultivated field.”) The Apache call themselves “Tin-ne(!!!)é-ah” – also meaning “The People.” Sometime before the 15th century, the Navajos adopted many Pueblo ways, while their Apache cousins remained nomadic hunters.

The Navajo and Apache occupied the Colorado Plateau, virtually surrounding the Pueblos.



## The Navajo

The Navajo herded sheep, goats, and cattle, supplementing their crops with raids.

Communities of widely scattered hogans – circular earth-covered lodges – occupied as many as 80,000 acres. Extended families farmed, herded sheep, and performed ceremonies. Neighboring families chose a headman. Navajo society was divided into 60 or so clans spread among the communities, and kinship was matrilineal.

Stealthy night raids on Pueblo neighbors, Spanish colonials, and Mexicans netted slaves, trade goods, and livestock. Navajo did not count coup, and left dead warriors on the battlefield for fear of evil spirits. Navajo abandoned a hogan if someone died within it.

The Navajo were forced into a reservation in New Mexico in 1863 (see sidebar, p. 98), but were allowed to return to their native lands in 1868. They became famous as silversmiths, weavers, and sheep-farmers, and by the 20th century were the most prosperous of Indian tribes.

## The Apache

“If you think an Apache can’t tell right from wrong – wrong him, and see what happens.”

Apache tribes on the edge of the plains lived in tipis and shared many Plains Indian practices, though they had no warrior societies, scorned war paint and counting coup, and rarely collected scalps for fear of the dead. When an Apache took a scalp, he handled it carefully for fear of harm from its magic, and discarded it immediately after the victory dance.

Apaches gained status, horses, and food from raids. Tribes further west primarily farmed, although many raided with Yumans, and all Apache tribes hunted. They lived in wickiups – pole frame huts of brush or reed mats.

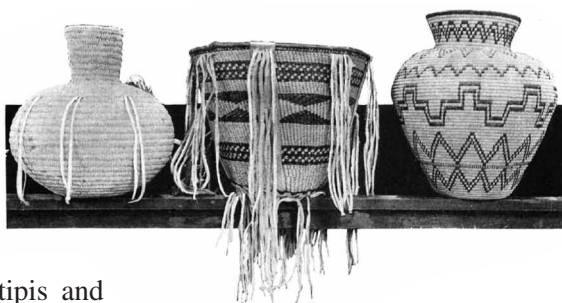
Each Apache bands had its own territory and headman. Several bands united under informal war chiefs. Apache tribes did not always consider other Apache tribes part of “The People.” Chiricahuas call the Tonto *Bini-e-dine* (“People Without Minds”) – which may account for the Spanish term *tonto*, meaning fool.

An extended family made up an Apache camp or village (called a “rancheria”). Camps moved frequently to better hunting and gathering grounds.

Apaches were stealthy, crafty, and experienced raiders. Eastern Apaches relied on horses, Western Apaches less so. Captives were often adopted into the tribe, but were occasionally tortured for revenge. (These incidents gave the Apache a Reputation for brutal torture – with a -2 reaction, affecting a large class of people. -5 points.)

Apaches used a weapon similar to a morningstar. A fist-sized rock in a rawhide pouch swung from a short wooden handle on a foot of rawhide. Warriors used them in close combat or when attacking a sleeping enemy. (Swing+2 crushing damage, Reach 1, 4 lbs., Min ST 11, 1 turn to ready. Uses the Flail skill, p. B50.)

Most Apaches were sent to reservations in 1875, though raids continued until Geronimo surrendered in 1886.



## THE GHOST DANCE

In 1870 and again in 1890, Indians began to dance new, solemn dances. The whites called the shuffling ceremonies “ghost dances,” for the Indians believed they would bring the dead to life. A Paiute medicine man named Wodziwob instigated the practice in 1870. Other tribes in Nevada and California followed suit. If they danced and prayed, Wodziwob told them, the whites would go away and the old days return. Gradually, however, the ghost dances died out.

Then, on New Year’s Day, 1889, a young Paiute named Wovoka experienced a vision. During a total eclipse, Wovoka’s spirit ascended to Heaven. There Jesus told him he would bring back the buffalo and other animals, and return the spirits of all the dead Indians. Jesus would make the earth new again, and Indians and whites would live together peaceably. The Indians must have faith and dance the Ghost Dance.

“Dance: Everywhere, keep on dancing,” Wovoka told his people. “You must not do harm to anyone. You must not fight. Do right always.”

His disciples spread the cult throughout the West. Both men and women danced, singing about their struggles and misfortunes. They wore white shirts with “medicine” designs to encourage the ghosts’ return – some said these shirts could stop bullets. The presiding medicine man tried to induce trances and visions in the dancers. Some saw visions of vast herds of buffalo and antelope, or met their dead kinsmen again.

*Continued on next page . . .*





# THE GREAT BASIN

## THE GHOST DANCE (CONTINUED)

The Plains Indians transformed the Ghost Dance to a belief that everyone except the Indians would be pushed off the land to drown in the seas. There was no need to go to war again – the Great Spirit would destroy the whites.

Fearing that the gatherings encouraged Indian activism, the whites outlawed them. The Indians continued to dance. Attempts by the military to stop the Ghost Dance Religion culminated in the massacre at Wounded Knee on December 29, 1890. Indian resistance died with the ghost dances.

## INDIAN TRADE

A well-developed trade system connecting the Pacific coast with the northern Plains was in place before the first contact with white traders in the 18th century. The Chinook Indians plied the Columbia river as middlemen, their “Chinook jargon” the lingua franca. When the white man’s trading ships began to call at the mouth of the Columbia, the Chinooks grew wealthy porting slaves and pelts downriver in exchange for steel knives, guns and ammunition, glass beads, and flour, cloth, blankets, rum, and knickknacks.

The trappers and settlers brought disease. An epidemic of “ague fever,” probably malaria, severely depleted the Chinook Indians in 1829. White settlers in mid-century pushed many tribes into small reservations in Washington and Oregon. By the 1880s, most Indian tribes had lost their lands and depended on white manufactured goods. Many worked for low wages, guiding prospectors or backpacking cargo over the mountain passes. There were too few jobs to support most Indians.

## TOTEM POLES

Totem poles are ostentatious reinforcements of family prestige and wealth, not religious artifacts. The wealthier the family, the more elaborate the display. The Indians had no iron or other sharp carving tools until the trading ships arrived in 1791 – their “totems” are probably modeled after Filipino and Hawaiian artifacts which arrived with the ships. The totem pole combines genealogical information, mystic animals, and a family crest. The supernatural beings represent family ancestors. Totems may also proclaim their owner’s exploits.

Winter snow is the only precipitation in the Great Basin. Rivers and streams disappear into “sinks” with no outlet. Saline lakes and alkaline flats are common. Sagebrush, piñon trees, and junipers constitute the vegetation.

“Digger” Indians, as the whites call the Great Basin Indians, traveled primarily in small family groups. Various bands occasionally gathered for communal hunts and autumn piñon nut harvests, but tribal identity was minimal. Leaders were followed only as long as they could provide for the safety and welfare of their band. Whites often tried to make treaties with seemingly important leaders, only to find out they had no influence over other bands and little control over their own.

The Indians foraged for seeds, nuts, roots, lizards, insects, and rodents. Their primary tool was a digging stick. Communal grasshopper, rabbit, and antelope drives occasionally provided a feast. Birds or fish sometimes enlivened the diet. The daily quest for water, firewood, and materials was vital to their precarious existence.

The major tribes were Paiute, Ute, and Shoshoni. Average population density was 1-10 people per 100 square miles. A few horse tribes toward the north and east hunted buffalo on the Great Plains. When whites arrived, many Indians became laborers or begged.

## THE PAIUTE

The Paiutes’ traditional way of life included the painstaking gathering of seeds and nuts, which Southern Paiutes supplemented with small gardens. Temporary brush windbreaks provided shelter in summer camps. Camping near permanent water, firewood, and food caches in wintertime, the Paiute made brush, grass, and reed-mat wickiups. By springtime, their meager supplies were usually gone. In summertime; Paiutes went naked, or wore bark aprons or breechcloths. They used rabbitskin blankets in cold weather.

Northern Paiutes occupied east central California, western Nevada, and eastern Oregon. The Walpapi and Yahuskin bands ranged furthest north and were known as the Snake Indians. With the rush of settlers in the 1840s and later, the Northern Paiute acquired guns and horses and fought to keep their lands.

When the U.S. government directed Paiutes onto reservations, many stayed, working for the whites or remaining on the fringes of their settlements.

## THE UTE

The Utes are closely related to the Paiutes, with the same language and lifestyle. Early in the 19th century, the Utes of western Colorado acquired horses from the Plains tribes and changed their lifestyle. They formed loose hunting bands and raided settlers’ livestock, made tipis as well as grass or brush houses, camped along wooded streams, and replaced their bark aprons and breechclouts with tailored skin garments.

Horse bands traded with each other and other tribes. Slave raids on Southern Paiute, Western Shoshoni, and Gosiute bands provided merchandise for trade in the Spanish settlements. Utes in southern Utah, Nevada, and California kept their old ways, alongside the Southern Paiute.

The mounted Utes joined the Northern Paiute and the Shoshoni in the local wars throughout the 1850s and 1860s. After 1870, these tribes had to beg, steal, and prostitute themselves to eat.



# THE SHOSHONI

Shoshoni Indians may be roughly divided into four groups. The horseless Western Shoshoni lived in central Nevada, and lived much like other “Digger” Indians of the Great Basin. Each family roamed the desert independently, gathering briefly for rabbit drives or dancing. A few obtained horses from the settlers. Eventually, whites simply pushed them aside.

The mounted bands of Northern Shoshoni ranged through northern Utah and Idaho. The Wind River Shoshoni made western Wyoming their home. They adopted many Plains Indians customs, including tipis and the practice of counting coup.

And in western Texas, the Comanches – an offshoot of the Shoshonis – retained the Shoshoni language.

## INDIANS OF THE NORTHWEST

The largest Indian populations lived in the Pacific Northwest. Topography splits the area into three provinces. Between the Rockies and the Cascades, the Columbia Plateau supported more than two dozen tribes. The Northwest Coast Indians enjoyed a complex, affluent society. In California and Baja, peaceful Indian tribelets spoke more than 100 dialects.

### THE PLATEAU

The plateau Indians relied on the rivers. In wintertime, they often lived near rapids, where they fished. Thirty families might share an earthlodge – a semi-subterranean building with an earth-covered domed roof. Villages contained a dozen or more earthlodges. Semi-permanent mountain camps were summer hunting and gathering bases. Most villages recognized one headman as leader.

Adolescent boys fasted and prayed for a Guardian Spirit on a mountaintop.

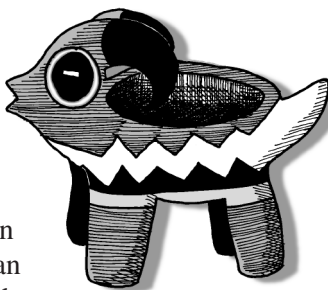
Plateau Indians used horses throughout the century. The Cayuse Indians built such a good horse trade that “cayuse” means horse in the Northwest. Some plateau tribes raided. Others, especially the Flathead, had a reputation for honesty and hospitality.

#### *The Nez Percé*

The Nez Percé were a typical Plateau tribe. They fished for salmon and gathered roots; they borrowed horses and many customs from the Plains Indians.

Unlike most Indians, the Nez Percé selectively bred their horses, one of the largest herds on the continent. Their preference for spotted horses developed the Appaloosa.

Increasing conflicts with fur traders, missionaries, settlers, and miners led to the Nez Percé War of 1877 (see p. 97). Newspaper reports of the war inspired popular support for the Indians. Chief Joseph’s surrender speech – “I will fight no more forever” – touched the nation, but U.S. policy trundled the Nez Percé off to reservations.



## MISSION INDIANS

Tribes “civilized” by the Spanish friars are known by their mission name: Costoan, Chumash, Cupeno, Diegueno, Fernandeno, Gabrieleno, Juaneno, Luiseno, and Serrano. These tribes spoke Shoshonean dialects, except for the Yuman-speaking Diegueno.

The missions were supposed to spread the faith and civilize the Indians, but kept them as virtual slaves. Indians worked the fields and herded cattle. Many converted, but many more died of European diseases.

When Mexico disbanded the missions in 1834, 20,500 Christianized Indians of an original 83,000 remained. Some tribes had vanished completely. The Mexican government granted the Indians citizenship and half of the mission property, but unscrupulous speculators exploited them. Many begged in the street.

## EASTERN INDIANS IN THE WEST

Seminole Indians were not encountered much in the West, since they only ventured out of the Florida Everglades or Indian Territory for specific reasons. Fierce fighters, they were at home in the swamp. They were known for their tracking ability and pride; they held grudges and sought revenge for wrongs done to them or to a member of their family.

Creeks, Choctaw, Chickasaw, and Cherokee all dressed like Anglos and spoke better English than most cowboys. They had their own police forces, schools, churches, and forms of entertainment. They rarely left Indian Territory.





## INDIAN MAGIC IN THE CAMPAIGN

GMs should choose what level of magic they want in their campaign, from spectacular to none at all.

**Strong Medicine:** Magic is spectacular and difficult for the white man to explain away. Sacred sites have normal to high mana; shamans know more spells and can cast them quickly enough to be effective in combat. Fantastic creatures exist, witches abound, and powerful medicine men can bring back the dead or transform themselves into monstrous forms. This is appropriate for a “Weird, Weird West” campaign; **GURPS Magic** and **GURPS Spirits** may be useful.

**Secret History:** Medicine works in subtle ways, as described in this book, but not well enough to defeat the white man’s technology (the Ghost Shirt or Chaperone spell may protect some Indians from Old West pistols, but it wouldn’t have saved the Ghost Dancers from Hotchkiss guns).



**It’s All in the Mind:** Any effects of medicine can be explained away by natural causes, luck, and faith. Guardian spirits may still bestow strictly mundane advantages which must be paid for with character points earned in vows, rituals, etc. (For example, a warrior might have High Pain Threshold while wearing war paint, but becomes Overconfident as a result; he loses both the advantage and disadvantage when he removes the paint.) Magical predictions, healing, etc. are unreliable. This is the highest magic level suitable for a realistic campaign.

**No Magic:** Belief in medicine is merely a delusion. Reaction modifiers for medicine men and the Guardian Spirit advantage still apply within the tribe.

## THE NORTHWEST COASTAL INDIANS

The Northwest coast tribes rivalled whites in their ostentation and accumulation of wealth and possessions. The area’s abundance meant they spent little time gathering food and had the raw materials for luxury. They made seaworthy boats and lived in roomy plank houses, but lacked agriculture and pottery. Coastal tribes warred to shame enemies or to save compromised honor in death, rather than to gain war booty.

### *Social Status and Potlatches*

Each person had his place, from the chief to the slave. Social status was hereditary, but titles and rights were formally bestowed at a *potlatch*, a ceremonial feast for gift-giving.

Giving gifts extended into everyday life as well. The more a tribesman gave away, the more prestige he won. A chief gave a blanket or small gift to anyone who performed a service for him. With the material wealth introduced by the fur trade, potlatches became status contests. Chiefs smashed boats, burned blankets, and broke knives to prove that their wealth was greatest. A bankrupt Indian lost his claim to a title.

## CALIFORNIA INDIANS

California Indian villages made up related family groups. Three to 30 neighboring villages formed a tribelet, whose chief lived in the largest village. The chief had no authority, but was heeded for his wisdom. Member villages shared resources.

Each tribelet had different customs. The Mojave Desert tribes farmed. Chumash seamen crafted plank boats. The Pomo made baskets – popular trade items decorated with feathers and beads, and waterproofed with asphaltum.

Before 1823, Spanish Franciscans established 21 missions in central and southern California. The converted “Mission Indians” became fatally dependent on their Spanish keepers. The 49ers brutalized northern California Indians. Disease, violence, and starvation killed more than 50,000 Indians in mid-century.

## EASTERN AND SOUTHERN TRIBES

The northeastern Indians were primarily woodland hunters, although many farmed and fished. By the 19th century, many tribes had been forced West.

Southeastern Indians were traditionally farmers, but hunted and gathered as well. The larger tribes included the Cherokee, Chickasaw, Choctaw, Creek, and Seminole Indians – the Five Civilized Tribes.

From the woods of east Texas through Louisiana and southern Arkansas were a number of tribes collectively called the Caddo Confederacies. The Hasinai were the largest of these groups and included eight separate tribes. Four other tribes made up a second group, the Kadohadachos, or Caddo proper. The third group was known as the Natchitoches. Many Indians from the Caddo Confederacies fought with the South during the Civil War.



# THE FIVE CIVILIZED TRIBES

These tribes adopted white customs and religion before the 19th century. Most were Baptist or Presbyterian. At the beginning of the 19th century they owned farms, livestock, and black slaves, and frequently intermarried with whites. In 1830, the Indian Removal Act exchanged their Florida tribal lands for Indian Territory in present-day Oklahoma.

The Choctaw and Chickasaw moved during the winters of 1831 to 1834. The Creeks were forced west in 1836; the Cherokee traveled the “Trail of Tears” in 1838. The forced moves killed nearly a third of the Indians.

## INDIAN MAGIC

Indian magic and Indian religion are one and the same. Plants, animals, inanimate objects, and natural phenomena all have spirits which can be called upon to render aid, and must be ritually thanked and appeased when aid is granted.

An Indian speaks with the spirits through chants and dances, in ceremonies, and with items of power such as drums, rattles, feathers, tobacco, and certain woods. The spirits speak through visions and omens. Medicine men use magic to invoke the spirits and bind them, control nature, help friends, and harm enemies.

Indian magic, or “medicine,” is powerful and not to be used lightly. Stringent vows ensure the practitioner’s purity and proscribed rituals guarantee the spirits’ continued favor. Power brings responsibility for the welfare of the tribe.

Each Indian tribe had its own name for the spirits, its own rituals, and its own magic items. This magic system is based mostly on the rituals of the Plains tribes; GMs are encouraged to invent new medicine for other tribes. How well magic works is also left up to the GM when designing a campaign; the system below is intended for a “cinematic” or “blended” campaign.

## THE VISION QUEST

Among the hunting and gathering cultures, especially the Plains tribes, Indians undergo a *vision quest* to gain magical abilities. An individual may attempt any number of vision quests, and have more than one Guardian Spirit. Dreamers and Shamans make repeated vision quests in search of more powerful medicine.

Male Indians in most tribes are expected to attempt their first vision quest when they reach puberty. Some have a vision of their Guardian Spirit on their first quest; some must make several attempts; some never find one; others are approached by their Guardian Spirits (usually in dreams) without making a quest.

Few tribes permit women to make vision quests until after menopause, but some receive Guardian Spirits in dreams. Some tribes permit young women to become Herbalists or Shamans, some allow it only after menopause, and some forbid it altogether.

If this first vision quest is successful, the seeker gains a Guardian Spirit, perhaps a new name, and sometimes a vision of his future or medicine that will help him fulfill the role the spirits have chosen for him. (See *Guardian Spirit*, pp. 69-71).

## COYOTE, THE TRICKSTER

The Trickster is a favorite figure in Indian tales. Plains tribes call him Coyote. To the north and east, he takes the form of the Great Hare. Northwestern tribes know him as Raven. He brought fire to the Indians, but most of the time he just makes trouble. Many believe him to be a deposed god. He uses his powers primarily to cause mischief. More often than not, events turn his jokes back on himself – one time he turned himself into a girl, and accidentally got pregnant.



## RETURNING THE MEDICINE

If a medicine man finds the price of his Guardian Spirit’s power too high, he may return to the place of the vision and ask the spirit to take it back. If the spirit agrees, it reveals the proper ritual in a vision. Once the medicine man performs the ritual and disposes of his medicine bundle and magic paraphernalia in a running stream, he is free of the power and its responsibilities.





## SORCERY

Some medicine men become sorcerers, corrupted by jealousy, greed, fear, or hatred. Rarely, a medicine man's Guardian Spirit directs him to kill someone, or forbids him to warn someone destined to die. The medicine man must comply or the spirit may kill him.

When a victim suspects sorcery, he asks a medicine man for a diagnosis and cure. If the medicine man discovers the spellcaster's identity, the victim's friends confront the accused. If the sorcerer refuses to lift the curse, the medicine man tries to reverse the spell. The accused sorcerer may swear his innocence with the Sun and the Earth his witness – he will surely be struck down if guilty.

Navajo especially fear witches, who traffic with death and the dead and engage in incest. Witches, often men, can shapeshift into wolves, owls, or other animals. Their most common magic involves a poison concocted from the corpses of children.



## THE SUN DANCE

Almost all Plains tribes observe some form of the Sun Dance – a complex religious rite celebrating tribal unity and ensuring spiritual favor. The focus of this midsummer gathering is the “Gazing at the Sun” dances. Warriors may undertake a Sun Dance to fulfill a vow to a Guardian Spirit or to secure supernatural aid (see *The Vision Quest*, pp. 67-68).

Celebrations and preparations precede the Sun Dance. People chosen for their virtue erect the Sun Lodge while shamans prepare each candidate for the dance he will undertake. When the Sun Dance begins, usually on the 12th day, previous Sun Dancers act as the dancers’ “captors.” They ceremonially pierce dancers’ skin and muscles with wooden skewers. The candidates then begin to dance.

*Continued on next page . . .*

Fasting, self-torture and self-sacrifice, dancing, and isolation all encouraged visions. Some tribes, especially after 1850, used hallucinatory peyote or jimson weed to induce visions.

## Preparations

The vision seeker must purify himself in body and mind with long hours in a sweat-bath and sincere prayers. A medicine man may prepare and instruct a first-time supplicant.

A Comanche must have a bone pipe, tobacco, and a source of fire (usually a fire drill, or a live coal wrapped in moss). Clad only in breechcloth and moccasins, he walks alone to a place where he will not be disturbed, yet near enough to the village to be able to return without help. He stops to smoke and pray four times along the way. The Sioux have vision pits with sage bedding and surrounded by tobacco offerings.

The quest location is important. Solitary hilltops or mountainsides are favored. Many tribes may have their own traditional worship sites: kivas, medicine lodges, and so on.

## The Vigil

The vision quest is a solitary undertaking typically lasting four days and nights. The seeker fasts and may forego sleep as well. Sponsors may bring water – rarely more than a sip each day.

Each seeker chooses his own way to contact the spirits. He may offer up his blood or his flesh to them, or stand naked throughout the day, arms outstretched with a pipe offering, moving only to follow the motion of the sun. The vigil continues until the seeker receives a vision or abandons the quest. Visions usually come by the fourth day. The seeker may prolong the quest if no vision arrives.

A seeker undertaking a vision quest must make both a Health and a Will roll each day. Each day after the first bears a cumulative -1 penalty. The quest fails on a critical failure of either roll, or a normal failure of both.

Each day, the GM makes a reaction roll for the spirits (see pp. B204-205). Modifiers include -4 if the seeker failed the HT or Will roll that day; +2 for a critical success; +6 for critical successes on both HT and Will; and a cumulative +1 for each day after the first. Ritual Modifiers for Consecrated Ground (see p. 79) apply; seekers who already have a Guardian Spirit add 1 to the reaction roll, Dreamers +2, Shamans +3. A reaction of Very Good or Excellent results in a vision and the acquisition of a Guardian Spirit. A result of Very Bad or Disastrous indicates the supplicant will *never* receive a vision, although the player shouldn't know this.

A vision seeker who undergoes self-torture may trade penalties on his Will and HT rolls for bonuses on the spirit reaction roll. For each -1 to either roll, apply a +1 to the spirit reaction roll. Penalties to his Will roll reflect the amount of pain he ritually inflicts on himself. Penalties to the HT roll represent more tangible sacrifices: -1 for any wound left to bleed on its own (see sidebar, p. B130), -1 for each square inch of skin offered up, and -5 for each finger joint sacrificed. The maximum reaction bonus self-torture gives is +6. Any character points gained in this way may be spent on magic items; see sidebar, pp. 71-72.

## The Vision

The nature of the vision – and of the Guardian Spirit who grants it – is up to the GM. A wolf howl, the rustling of the wind, or the scream of an eagle may inform the seeker of his newly acquired guardian. Or perhaps he hallucinates that a beast or god appears and speaks to him.



## GUARDIAN SPIRITS

The Sioux believe in *Wakan Tanka*, the Great Mystery or Great Spirit. There are four Superior Gods – Inyan, the Rock; Maka, the Earth; Skan, the Sky; and Wi, the Sun. Their Associate Gods include Hanwi, the Moon, helper to the Sun; Tate, the Wind, who serves Sky; Whope, daughter of Sun and Moon, associate of Earth; and Wakinyan, the Winged, known as Thunder, whose glance is lightning. Lesser gods, sons and daughters to the Superior or Associate gods, are the Buffalo, the Bear, the Four Winds, and the Whirlwind. With them are the Wanalapi, four powers – *Nagi*, or personality; *Niya*, or vitality; *Nagila*, or essence; and *Sicun*, or power. These beings are all benevolent aspects of Wakan Tanka – sixteen, yet one.

The Great Spirit also manifests itself as evil demons, monsters, water spirits, and other foul things. Iya, the chief of all evil, appears as a cyclone. Iktomi, the Trickster, is a deposed god. Waziya, the Old Man, and his wife Wakanaka, the Witch, figure in many frightening Indian tales.

Most Plains Indians' beliefs are similar to Sioux beliefs. Any of the gods, or a myriad of other supernatural beings, may visit an Indian during a vision quest.

If someone quests in a spot associated with a spirit – the grave of a renowned Dreamer of Wolves, for example – that spirit is the most likely to answer. If the seeker already has a Guardian Spirit, the same one will probably not answer unless specifically called. If no particular spirit is sought, the GM may roll on the NPC reaction table. The better the reaction, the more powerful the spirit. Excellent indicates that Wakan Tanka itself produces an intense vision. The GM may apply the same modifiers to the reaction roll as to the roll which brought the vision.

A Guardian Spirit may grant a vision of a particular ritual, song, or charm that will help the quester succeed in the role the spirit predicts for him. A future medicine man may be taught a song that will increase the health or strength of his tribe. A warrior may be given a vision of a shield that protects against bullets,



or a pipe that will hide him from his enemies, but these items will have to be made with the help of a medicine man. Any advantages or improved skills gained in this way should be paid for with character points collected in rituals, or by taking Vows and disadvantages of equal value.

The vows which the Guardian Spirit demands may outweigh the benefits. The seeker may choose to decline the offer of power, taking care not to offend the spirit (see sidebar, p. 67). If he accepts, though, he gains the Guardian Spirit advantage.

Guardian Spirits can grant powers only within their own spheres of influence. Some important Guardian Spirits are listed below.

## THE SUN DANCE (CONTINUED)

There are four separate dances performed at the same time in the sacred Sun Lodge. Each dance has four stages, with rests between. The dancer rolls against HT and Will at each stage to avoid crying out or losing consciousness – hence losing honor.

*Gaze at the Sun* – Dancers must bear the pain of their wounds without a sound, and gaze continuously at the sun as they dance. No modifiers to vision quest reaction rolls.



*Gaze at the Sun Buffalo* – The dancer's skin is usually skewered below each shoulder blade. Heavy thongs secure two or four buffalo skulls to the skewers. These skulls drag on the ground behind the dancer. +1 to vision quest reaction rolls. In addition, HT and Will rolls are at -1 each, with corresponding bonuses to the spirit's reaction roll.

*Gaze at the Sun Staked* – Two skewers pierce the dancer's back and one each breast. The captor secures the dancer in the center of four upright poles, tying the skewers to the poles with buffalo-hair ropes. The dancer must struggle against these bonds, being careful *not* to break free. +2 to vision quest reaction rolls. HT and Will rolls are at -2 each.

*Gaze at the Sun Suspended* – This highest form of the Sun Dance requires only two skewers, piercing the breast or back. Heavy buffalo-hair ropes suspend the dancer from the ceremonial Sun Pole. Between stages, assistants lower him so he may rest. +3 to vision quest rolls. HT and Will rolls are at -3 each.

In the fourth stage of the dances, the captives struggle in earnest to tear themselves from their bonds. To escape without help brings great honor. Failure of the Will roll in the final stage means the dancer requires assistance from friends. A warrior who fails his HT roll loses consciousness and a friend must free him.

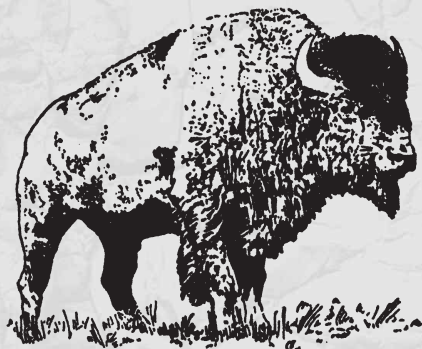
Success at the Sun Dance counts as fulfilling a Major Vow (-10 point).



## MEDICINE BUNDLES

Many Indians have protective charms – skin bags containing magical items. These “medicine bundles” bring luck and protection, and their contents may be useful in contacting the spirit world. They may also be used for healing: Sitting Bull’s contained two bowls, a pestle, a cup, a rattle, a woven ring of herbs, a mink skin containing 10 herbal cures, a pouch of sacred paint, and an eagle-bone whistle. Large medicine bundles add to the power of consecrated ground (see Ritual Modifiers Table, p. 79).

Each bundle is made according to instructions received in a vision. Indians wear small charms around their necks or in their hair, tie them on their horse’s mane or tail, or put them on their favorite weapons. Bundles may be incredibly elaborate, or as simple as a bag with a few small stones, a handful of herbs, a bird’s claw, and the owner’s preserved umbilicus.



The GM should use medicine bundles creatively. One Osage medicine bundle, called the *waxobe*, increased the courage of warriors who viewed it and heard the story it told (treat as giving the Fearlessness advantage).

A medicine man wishing to make a bundle must seek a vision. The GM sets the effects and costs – in materials and character points – of the medicine bundle.

## BEAR

Bear is hard to kill, and able to heal its own wounds – abilities it may bestow on those it patronizes, who often become Herbalists. It also governs sleep, and has particular power over dreams. In return, it demands that those who accept its medicine aid the wounded (Major Vow, -10).

Bear teaches Medical skills, and can bestow the mundane advantages of Deep Sleeper, Disease-Resistant, High Pain Threshold, Immunity to Disease, Rapid Healing, Toughness, and Very Rapid Healing. In a cinematic campaign, it can also bestow Extra Hit Points and Hard to Kill. Warriors with Bear as their Guardian Spirit may become Berserk.



## BUFFALO

Buffalo protects young girls, and is the patron of generosity, abundance, love, and family. It counsels peace and negotiation. Buffalo Dreamers know when and where the buffalo herds will appear, and how best to approach them. They know the secrets of the Big Twisted Flute which ensures a maiden’s love for the musician. Their powers can protect them from arrows. Buffalo Dreamers must always use their magic for the welfare of others, and cannot refuse a request for aid (Great Vow, -15). They live in black tipis with a lone buffalo painted on the back.

Buffalo teaches Diplomacy, Leadership, and Sex Appeal, and can bestow the mundane advantages of Charisma and Deep Sleeper.

## EAGLE

Eagle Spirit grants powers of vision and hunting; it favors hunters, war chiefs, and Nacas. Eagle Spirit demands a Minor Vow – its proteges may never allow anyone to walk behind them while eating. It may also demand Dreamers an additional Minor Vow of never eating the flesh of birds.

Eagle teaches Bow, Leadership, Riding, Strategy, Survival, Tactics, and Tracking. It can bestow the mundane advantages of Absolute Direction, Acute Vision, Danger Sense, and Night Vision. In a cinematic campaign, it can also bestow Increased Move and Passive Defense; in a high-magic campaign, Eagle shamans may be able to shapeshift to Eagle form.

## THUNDER

The seeker granted a vision of Thunder Spirit must accept the power or risk being struck by lightning. Thunder grants long life, luck, healing abilities, and power over fire, lightning, and weather. In return, the medicine man must live on the edge of camp in a rotting tipi, wear buffalo robes in summer and breechcloth in winter, and eat burning-hot food with his bare hands (-15 points).



Thunder teaches Gambling, Meteorology, Medical skills, Riding, and Survival. It can bestow the mundane advantages of High Pain Threshold, Longevity, Luck, Rapid Healing, Temperature Tolerance (up to 2 levels), and Very Rapid Healing. In a cinematic campaign, it can grant Hard to Kill, and greater levels of Luck and Temperature Tolerance.

## WOLF

Wolf medicine grants invulnerability to bullets. Wolf Dreamers walk barefoot on cold snow and are not bothered by winter. They put red paint between their toes, like their brother wolves, and vow never to harm their brethren (-11 points). Wolves patronize warriors, and may reveal the whereabouts and strengths of enemies.

Wolf teaches Combat Skills and Tactics. It can bestow the mundane advantages of Combat Reflexes, Danger Sense, Fearlessness, High Pain Threshold, Temperature Tolerance (up to 2 levels), and Toughness. In a cinematic campaign, it can grant Hard to Kill, Passive Defense, and greater levels of Temperature Tolerance. Warriors with Wolf as their Guardian Spirit may become Berserk.

## WAKAN TANKA

Only very lucky or persistent medicine men receive the favors of Wakan Tanka, the Great Spirit. These become Shamans, and may learn any ritual known. Wakan Tanka demands a Great Vow to Show Respect for all Nature, which includes never refusing a request for aid (-15 points). Wakan Tanka may grant any ability that lesser spirits may bestow.

Other Guardian Spirits include Antelope, Badger, Elk, Skunk, Snake, Turtle, Earth, Sky, and Wind. Almost every animal may grant magical powers; the horse and the dog are exceptions. Sun, according to the Sioux, "is too powerful, and will not be a spirit to any person."

## HERBALISTS, DREAMERS, AND SHAMANS

Sioux society has three classes of medicine men: Herbalists, Dreamers, and Shamans. The point cost is not cumulative; e.g. Dreamers who wish to become Shaman pay only 25 points (40-15), or 10 if they already have the Empathy advantage.

## ENCHANTED ITEMS

Indians believe that many things, such as eagle feathers, wood from the ash tree, and tobacco, are magical. Man-made items retain some of the power of their materials, but require enchantment to become truly powerful.

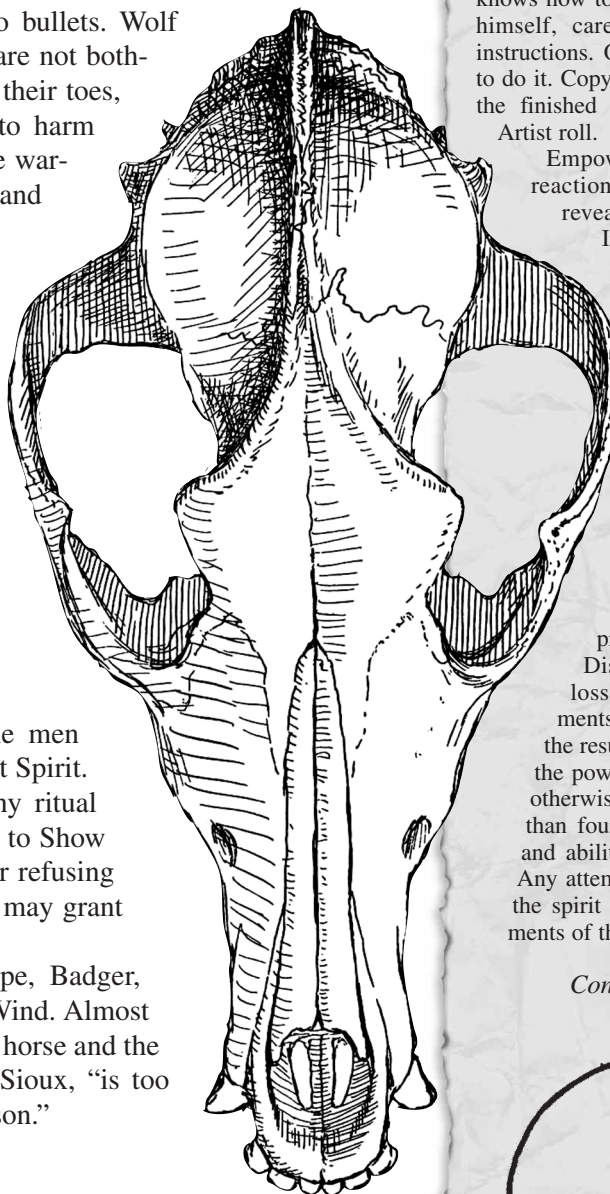
An Indian without a Guardian Spirit-granted design may buy one – usually for a shield or a medicine bundle. If the buyer knows how to make the item, he will do so himself, carefully following the seller's instructions. Otherwise he will ask another to do it. Copying the purchased design onto the finished product requires a DX-2 or Artist roll.

Empowering the copy requires a reaction roll for the spirit which revealed the original design.

Indians with no Guardian Spirit advantage have a -5 to the spirit's reaction roll. The GM should apply additional modifiers based on the honor and behavior of both the buyer and the seller, their relationship to the Guardian Spirit, and the level of magic in the campaign.

With an Excellent reaction, the copy duplicates the original in Power and abilities. Lesser reactions may produce less powerful copies. A Disastrous reaction causes the loss of the original's enchantments. The GM should not reveal the result – the owners will believe in the powers of both items until proven otherwise. Spirits rarely allow more than four items with the same design and abilities, and never more than 12. Any attempt to create more copies than the spirit permits destroys the enchantments of the original and all copies.

*Continued on next page . . .*





## ENCHANTED ITEMS (CONTINUED)

War Shields, always magical and made only by Dreamers or Shamans, are the most powerful and sought-after items. A good shield is worth a good horse, and should protect its owner from harm in battle. Each shield requires care or the magic won't work – the warrior must use certain war paint designs, take a vow before battle, and store the shield a particular way while not using it. (See *Shields*, p. 59.)



Arrows are often enchanted; the Cheyenne performed an annual arrow renewal dance, lasting four days. Lances and bows may also be enchanted to increase a warrior's skill.

Rattles are used in rituals by so many tribes that the sign-language gesture for "rattle" also meant "sacred." Enchanted rattles may give bonuses in rituals.

Flutes are especially powerful, and only medicine men may make them. They come in many sizes, from a tiny eagle-bone whistle used in the Sun Dance to the "Big Twisted Flute" made by Buffalo Dreamers. These flutes give power in love to a musician who plays music revealed in a vision (treat as the *Love Charm* ritual, p. 77, or add the amount by which the player makes his Musical Instrument roll to his next Sex-Appeal roll).

## Herbalist

5 points

A *Herbalist* must have the *Guardian Spirit* advantage, but he relies primarily on his knowledge of herbs and poultices to perform "medicine." A *Herbalist* is aware of the supernatural, although only at a very basic, intuitive level. A successful IQ roll allows him to sense any spirit presences within IQ/2 yards. This manifests as a "gut feeling," a tingling sensation, or some other indirect means. A failed roll reveals nothing; a critical failure misleads him. If an intense supernatural event is taking place within his sensory range, the GM may roll against his IQ to see if he senses it. *Herbalists* are at -3 to perform any rituals and ceremonies, but +1 to resist hostile rituals or spiritual activities. *Herbalists* may purchase the *Visualization* (p. CI47) advantage.

## Dreamer

15 points

*Dreamers* are more powerful than *Herbalists*. Their link with the supernatural is stronger, and they are able to sense spiritual manifestations within IQ yards with an IQ roll as above. They receive a +2 on reaction rolls from those who share their belief system, and -2 from unbelievers, people with fragile egos, and members of antagonistic groups or religions. The reaction roll modifier is always positive in potential combat or Intimidation rolls; if nothing else, they can always inspire fear in others. *Dreamers* can learn and perform rituals and ceremonies at no penalty, and are +2 to resist hostile rituals or spiritual activities. They can purchase the *Visualization*, *Channelling* (p. CI34), *Focus*, and *Spirit Advisor* advantages.

## Focus

10 points/level

A focus may be a medicine bundle, pipe, rattle, musical instrument, costume, or some other physical item used by *Dreamers* and *Shamans* in their rituals. It focuses Will, granting a bonus of +1 per level on any ritual casting roll. It also helps resistance rolls, adding +1 to any rolls to resist possession attempts, hostile rituals, and any attack that can be resisted by the mind. The maximum bonus that can be purchased is +2 for *Dreamers* and +3 for *Shamans* (bundles giving up to +5 may be possible in high-magic campaigns). If the focus is stolen or destroyed, the dreamer or shaman loses those points until he recovers or repairs it.

## Spirit Advisor

Variable

The dreamer's guardian spirit occasionally shares its wisdom with the dreamer, giving warnings, clues, and other valuable information; Bear might advise on *Diagnosis*, Eagle on *Strategy*, etc., with an effective skill of 16. The base cost of this power is 10 points. Use the *Frequency of Appearance* modifiers on p. B23 to determine the actual cost. Medicine men without this advantage may have to make vision quests to ask the advice of their guardian spirit.

*Dreamers* who perform the *Gaze at the Sun Suspended Dance* (see sidebar, p. 59) may become *Shamans*.

## Shaman

40 points

*Shamans* receive their power directly from the Great Spirit (*Wakan Tanka*) and can perform powerful magic, as the Great Spirit has power over all things. They see more of the world's supernatural forces than do most other humans, and automatically get the *Empathy* advantage. They can sense paranormal manifestations within IQ yards (no roll required), and can pinpoint their source on an IQ roll (sentient manifestations and other magicians can try to hide themselves by a *Quick Contest of Wills*). A *Shaman* can learn *hanbloglaka*, the language of the spirits (M/VH), to communicate with them directly. Even without using rituals,



they can try to command spirits within their sensory range (Quick Contest between the spirit's Will and the shaman's Will-3). As with Dreamers, they inspire instinctive feelings (both positive and negative) in those around them; the reaction modifier is +3 or -3, as above. Shamans can purchase the same advantages as Dreamers, as well as one or two levels of Metabolism Control (p. CI60), and receive a +3 bonus to Will rolls against hostile rituals or spirit activities.

## LEARNING THE TRADE

The greatest medicine men show aptitude early on. Children who experience visions or demonstrate unusual luck or abilities are apprenticed to the tribe's best medicine men. Medicine men will share their knowledge only with an apprentice with the same Guardian Spirit. The student must learn and observe all the taboos and restrictions the Guardian Spirit requires. Chastity (Minor Vow, -5) may be mandatory during the seven-year training period. The final initiation ceremony often involves ritual scarification and other trials.

Some medicine men are fakes, performing the outward rituals only. These rarely accept apprentices they don't think they can fool, unless the student lacks true power himself.

Medicine men can rarely support themselves with their powers. Patients usually reward success with gifts, but medicine men risk angering their Guardian Spirits if they demand payment.

## MAKING MEDICINE

All magic rituals are Mental/Very Hard skills (see pp. B82-83). Unless the Guardian Spirit reveals the ritual in a vision, they must be learned from a teacher.

All Indian magic is ceremonial, requiring elaborate and time-consuming rituals. Medicine men usually perform their magic alone, except during the community dances when dancers, drummers, and spectators contribute their energy (see Ritual Modifiers table). A medicine man must pay for his magic – with days of fasting and self-torture, or a piece of his body such as a finger joint.

Visions are vital to Indian magic. Medicine men seek them not only to gain Guardian Spirits but to communicate with the spirit world. Important matters requiring the advice or aid of the spirits may also send a medicine man in search of a vision.

Magic is fickle, and many taboos and rules surround its use. Magical items, the medicine man, and all his paraphernalia must be protected from grease and menstruating women. Certain Guardian Spirits forbid their wards, on threat of death, to speak of them or of the power they granted (Minor Vow, -5). And nearly every Guardian Spirit demands strict observance of dietary restrictions, customs, and vows. Failure to follow the requirements may result in the loss of the Guardian Spirit and any advantages it bestows, or in illness or death.<sup>o</sup>

### Healing Medicine

Indians believe in four different causes of disease. A patient commonly brings disease on himself by violating a taboo or committing some crime; the medicine man identifies the problem and conducts a purifying ceremony. Sometimes the victim has been pierced by a disease-causing object sent by hostile spirits or a sorcerer. The medicine man must find and remove the object to cure the disease.

## QUICK-AND-DIRTY MAGICAL ITEMS

For campaigns where magic is powerful, the easiest way to construct enchanted items is with the Super Equipment rules (pp. SU68-71), with the GM and Guardian Spirit determining which advantages can be bought, and the maker paying the required cost in character points.



Example: Wolf gives Little Otter a vision of a shield with an extra Passive Defense of +2 (50 points). However, the shield is breakable, with DR of less than 15 (-15%); is -2 to hit (-20%) and can be stolen with a Contest of ST (-30%), but is not obviously powerful (1/2 limitation; 15%) and will not work for someone without the same Guardian Spirit (1/2 limitation, 7.5%). Limitations total 42.5%; the shield costs 29 points. Little Otter pays for it with a Great Vow never to retreat (-15), his vows to Wolf (-11), and three points gained from counting coup. If he breaks any of his vows, the shield ceases to work until he undergoes a purification ritual.



## OTHER FORMS OF MAGIC

**GURPS Voodoo.** Voodoo was a major force in 19th-century New Orleans, where Voodoo Queen Marie Laveau held sway until 1875. Voodoo practitioners may have come west with the 49ers, riverboat gamblers, and floating hog ranches. Seances were a popular form of entertainment in the Old West after the Civil War, and some mediums may have real power. Indian myths contain creatures very like In-Betweeners.



### **GURPS Vampire, Werewolf, and Mage.**

Werewolves and sorcerors are common in Indian myth, and the white man brought vampire myths (and possibly vampires?) to America, making the Old West a suitable setting for a World of Darkness campaign.

Inherent Magic (see p. CI38). Low-powered knacks such as Seek Earth, Seek Water, Beast-Soother, Bravery, and Rejoin are appropriate for a blended or cinematic campaign. Dowzers are widely respected in many communities; treat as an inherent Seek Water spell, costing 4 points. In a campaign that allows it, Dowsing may be an Average or Comfortable freelance job.

Rune magic (see **GURPS Magic**) may be practiced by Indian tribes with a pictorial language, brought to the Old West by Scandinavian immigrants, or rediscovered in some Viking site.

Orson Scott Card's *Alvin Maker* series depicts an alternative 19th-century America where knacks and hexes work; Pat Murphy's *Nadya* tells the story of a settler woman who is also a werewolf; George R. R. Martin's *Fevre Dream* follows rival vampires on the riverboats; and Tim Powers' *On Stranger Tides* has pirates in the Caribbean using voodoo. All are recommended.

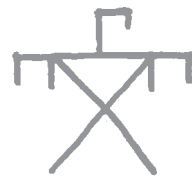
More serious diseases arise when the victim's soul is stolen or lost. In this case, the medicine man must find the soul, free it, and lure it back into the patient. Worst of all, an evil spirit may actually possess the patient. The medicine man must lure or scare the hostile spirit out of the patient's body – often receiving it into his own – and combat it and banish it to the spirit world.

Herbs, sweat baths, and massage supplement healing spells. The rituals and methods used depend on the particular illness or injury and on the dictates of the Guardian Spirit. Bear, Buffalo, and Thunder teach most Path of Health rituals.

## ***Medicine for the Hunt and for Warfare***

Before hunting or warring, all participants must purify themselves and ritually prepare for the tasks ahead. Buffalo, Elk, or Deer dreamers may ask their Guardian Spirits to call herds into the area. Wolf Dreamers may request a good hunt. Successful hunters must thank the animals who sacrificed themselves and perform rituals to ensure the animal spirit's rebirth.

War medicine is most commonly performed over the warrior's weapons and shield. A medicine bundle offers protection as well (see sidebar, p. 70). Medicine men strive to make magic shirts that stop bullets. And the members of every war or raiding party seek the blessings of the spirits.



## ***Special Aid***

Medicine men rarely call for special aid in any but the gravest matters. Guardian Spirits are fickle and very demanding, usually requiring a Vow to perform some difficult or dangerous task or sacrifice in return for the aid.

Guardian Spirits reveal themselves through visions, which may be warnings, prophecies, or revelations. The spirits rarely offer assistance unasked, but often respond when properly approached.

## **MAGICAL ITEMS**

Enchanted weapons, shields, charms, war paint, and musical instruments are all part of Indian magic (see sidebar, pp. 71-72). The medicine man crafts and enchants the item at the same time, following a prescribed ritual. A magical design on the item holds the power.

Magical designs are granted to seekers by their Guardian Spirits, but must be interpreted by medicine men, who will know the precise ceremony to be used when enchanting an item. The vision also reveals the special care and attention the item requires to retain its power. A shield may need to be hung in a special place, wrapped in a particular covering, or kept away from certain evil influences while not in use (one Comanche shield had to be kept half a mile from camp). Failure to follow an item's rules destroys its power until a purification ritual can be performed.

The Cheyenne warrior Roman Nose had a war-bonnet that rendered him immune to bullets and arrows – but at a cost. One of the vows he had to obey was not to eat food that had been touched by metal utensils. Realizing before one battle that he'd accidentally violated this taboo, he stayed out of the fray and began cleansing himself, until told that his fellow warriors were dying. Saying, "I know that I shall be killed today," Roman Nose rode out to lead the charge, and was gunned down.



# RITUAL MAGIC

Listed below are the five basic Paths of ritual magic, and some sample rituals. Herbalists and Dreamers with Bear or Buffalo as their Guardian Spirits are more likely to know the Paths of Dreams and Health; Thunder Dreamers, the Paths of Health and Luck; Eagle and Wolf Dreamers specialize in rituals that will aid in the hunt and warfare.

## CHARMS

Many rituals are conducted around a charm, a small object empowered to grant benefits or protection. Only one charm of each type can be worn at a time. Most charms also work best when worn in direct contact with the skin at all times. Charms generally only work for the specific person they were made for.

## THE PATH OF DREAMS

Through these rituals, medicine men gain access to the dream world, which in turn enables them to reach and manipulate other people's dreams, as well as their own.

While in the dream world, the caster can conduct other rituals, although these only affect any "dream selves" in the area, not the physical bodies of normal people.

### *Dreamwalk*      *Defaults to Unmodified Path of Dreams*

After conducting this ritual, the magician enters a trance. After a period of disorientation, he will start to dream. The sojourn to the dream world can last as long as the magician wills it; to leave, all that is necessary is a Path of Dreams roll – unless an outside force is attempting to detain the visitor there. This may be used as a way of contacting spirits or captive souls when the shaman is unable to make a vision quest; reaction rolls are at -4, but these can be improved with ritual modifiers.

### *Dream-Delving*      *Defaults to Path of Dreams-7*

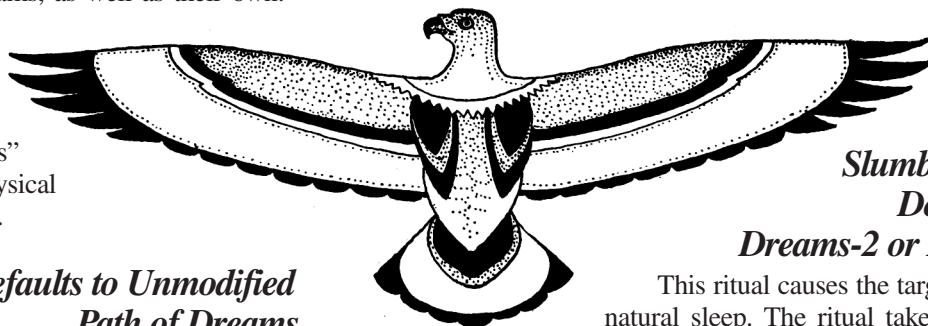
The caster performs a one-hour ritual to reach into the target's mind and retrieve a particular piece of information. This can be everything relevant the target knows about a particular person, place, or thing, or an answer to a specific question the caster has (provided the target knows the answer). The target need not be sleeping for the ritual to work, but an awake and alert target resists at +4. If the caster is successful, he gets the desired information in the form of a vision or "gut feeling." A failure results in no information, and a critical failure results in misleading information, so the GM should make the roll for this ritual in secret.

### *Dream Sanctum*      *Defaults to Path of Dreams-3 or Path of Protection-6*

A dream sanctum is usually created around an object or area in the material world to resist intrusions or attacks from the dream world. Any Dream ritual that attempts to affect anyone inside the Sanctum must win a Contest of Skills against the Sanctum in order to succeed. Roll once each hour until the sanctum or the ritual fails. If the subject moves away from the protected space by a Dream ritual, his dream self is vulnerable to attack in the dream world.

### *Dream Visitor*      *Defaults to Path of Dreams-2*

The medicine man can enter someone else's dream. The subject must be asleep while this 10-minute ritual is conducted, and resists with his Will. If the ritual is successful, the caster falls into a trance and, after a brief sojourn in the dream world, will enter the subject's dreams. Once there, the caster can try to reshape elements of the dream by imposing his will on the environment. The traveler can send messages, deliver warnings, create pleasant images, or inflict nightmares on the dreamer. The dreamer will always remember the content of these dreams.



### *Slumber* *Defaults to Path of Dreams-2 or Path of Health-2*

This ritual causes the target to fall into a deep, natural sleep. The ritual takes 10 minutes to perform, and the target must make an immediate Will roll to avoid falling asleep. For every two hours the target has been awake beyond 16 hours, subtract 1 from his Will roll, so a target that has been up for 24 hours straight makes his Will roll at -8. The target must make another Will roll every 2 hours until he falls asleep. The target's slumber is normal in every way, and untroubled (unless some outside force intervenes, like another ritual). If left undisturbed, the target sleeps for 2+1d hours before waking. The target can be awakened normally at any time. Magicians often use this ritual as a prelude to other Dream rituals, although it can also be used to provide rest and comfort, or to enable raiders to avoid guards.

## THE PATH OF HEALTH

Though shamans are constrained from using harmful spells, many of these ceremonies can be reversed. Curses and hostile rituals, when used, require two rolls: one to conduct the attack successfully, and the other to shield the caster from the effects of the ritual. A critical failure means that the spell backfires on the caster.



## **Fertility**

### **Defaults to Path of Health-2 or Path of Luck-4**

This ritual helps ensure reproduction, from crops to animals (including people). For crops, the medicine man performs a one-hour ritual and rolls; if successful, the plants grow quickly and well, untroubled by pests and disease. Overall yield is increased by around 10% for every 2 points by which the caster succeeded, to a maximum of +100% (a true bumper crop).

For animals, the ritual prepares a charm that is placed on or near a female subject. The next time it is possible for the subject to conceive, she does. This ritual does not circumvent contraception, nor medical conditions that make it impossible for the subject to conceive, although it *will* circumvent conditions that merely make conception difficult.

## **Hasten Horse**

### **Defaults to Path of Health-5 or Path of Luck-5**

Increases a horse's Move score: +1 if cast by a Herbalist, +2 by a Dreamer, +3 by a Shaman.

## **Remove Pestilence**

### **Defaults to Unmodified Path of Health**

This ritual can cure disease and any long-term ailment (from arthritis to a heart condition). The severity of the ailment and the physical condition of the patient determine the difficulty of the ritual (a cancer-ravaged body is much harder to help than that of an 18-year-old athlete). The ritual is conducted around the patient, lasts 1d hours, and includes the use of aromatic herbs and oils on the affected body parts. At the end of the ritual, the caster makes his roll. On a success, the symptoms and eventually the disease are eradicated over a period of 3d days.

**Modifiers:** The ritual has a base penalty of (patient's HT-12); if the patient has a HT of 12 or higher, there is no bonus or penalty. If the disease is the result of a curse, the caster must win a Quick Contest of Skills with the hostile ritual; even if the ritual fails, the caster may (on a successful Occultism roll) find out something about the source of the curse. The ritual will also reveal if the disease is the result of the subject's soul being stolen or lost, or whether the subject is possessed. A missing soul can be located with a vision quest, Dreamwalk, or Seeker ritual; freeing it requires a contest of skills with whatever holds it captive. Possession is dealt with by the Banish ritual.

The caster is at +1 against minor ailments, but up to -4 for most of the plagues that affected Indians in the Old West (smallpox, cholera, etc.), and -7 for a congenital heart defect. On a critical failure, the medicine man contracts the disease! A medicine man cannot cast this spell on himself.

This ritual can also be used to dispel swarms of vermin. An uncontrolled one-hex swarm can be dispersed at -2; area modifiers apply to larger swarms, or to empty a building.

## **Slumber**

### **Defaults to Path of Health-3 or Path of Dreams-2**

See *Slumber* under *Path of Dreams*.

## **Soothe Defaults to Unmodified Path of Health**

A simple ritual that helps relieve pain and suffering and ease the symptoms of illness or injury. The ritual takes 10 minutes, after which the caster rolls. If successful, any penalties affecting the subject due to pain are reduced by the amount by which the caster made his roll for 1d hours. In addition to alleviating pain due to illness and injury, this ritual is also used to ease labor and childbirth.

## **Succor**

### **Defaults to Path of Health-4**

This ritual includes dressing an open wound and applying a plaster of curative herbs and other substances that also act as rudimentary antiseptics. This takes 5d minutes. At the end of the ritual, the wounds are considered to be bandaged, and if the caster has First Aid or Physician, the patient gains the benefits of a successful First Aid roll at the appropriate tech level (see p. B128). The caster

then rolls against his Succor skill; on a successful roll, the effects of the ritual will last for one day per point by which the roll was made (a minimum of one day). A failure means the patient will

receive no extraordinary benefits. Success means the subject can make three HT+1 rolls per day to regain lost hit points.

## **Vitality**

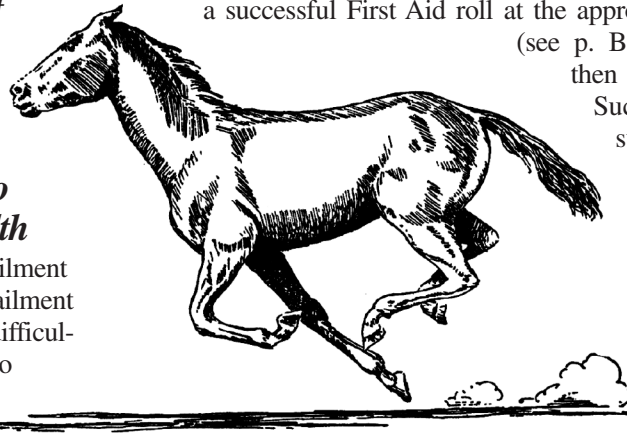
### **Defaults to Path of Health-3 or Path of Protection-4**

Vitality protects the subject from illness. Subjects blessed by this 2-hour-long ritual will be protected against one possible infection or contagion (see p. B133); the subject will not be infected by the disease unless he rolls a critical failure on a HT roll.

## **Warrior's Blessing**

### **Defaults to Path of Health-6**

Warrior's Blessing increases the subject's speed and combat skills or strength. The one-hour ritual produces a charm for a particular character. Any time thereafter that character can use the charm to invoke one of two benefits. First, the character can gain Combat Reflexes and +1 to Basic Speed by paying 1 Fatigue per turn. (If the character already has Combat Reflexes, double the normal benefits.) Or the character can increase his ST by 50% at a cost of 1 Fatigue per turn. When the subject stops paying Fatigue, the effect ends and the charm no longer has any power. If the subject of this ritual already has Hyper-Reflexes or Hyper-Strength (p. C158), the normal Fatigue costs for those advantages is halved (1 Fatigue every other turn).





# THE PATH OF LUCK

These ceremonies directly affect probability, as directed by the will of the caster and the power of his guardian spirit. Both good luck (blessings) and bad luck (curses) can be “created” through the effects of these rituals. The weather can also be affected in this way, although it requires a great deal of effort. Luck ceremonies also allow the magician to get visions of the future, although such predictions are not always reliable. Listed below are several common examples.

## *Chaperone*

### *Defaults to Path of Luck-3 or Path of Protection-5*

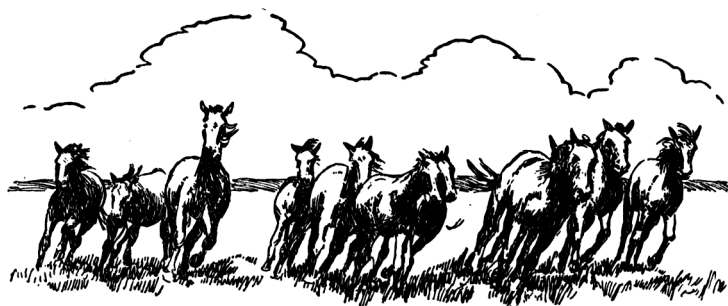
This one-shot charm of protection will safeguard the wearer against one danger, threat or curse. Investing it with spiritual powers requires an hour-long ceremony. The charm must be worn next to or painted onto the skin. Any minor or moderate curse will automatically fail against the protected party. When the charm has acted, it will become useless. Charms cannot be saved or hoarded; only one charm can be made for one person at any given time, and no other can be created until he has used up the previous one.

## *Death Vision*

### *Defaults to Path of Luck-5*

This ritual creates a dark mirror which shows a person's face at the time of death; medicine men cast this spell for warriors before they go on a raid. If a warrior sees himself with wrinkles and white hair, it indicates that he may survive the day and live to old age, but if he sees himself still young, but bleeding or scalped, he will be excused for turning back from the warpath.

Modifier: +4 for animal sacrifice.



## *Find Herd Defaults to Unmodified Path of Luck*

Gives a vision of the nearest herd (buffalo, deer, elk, etc.), and indicates direction and distance. Time to cast: 10 minutes for a 10-mile radius, 20 minutes for 20 miles, etc. Requires an insect or small animal (unharmful).

## *Love Charm*

### *Defaults to Path of Luck-3*

One of the most demanded abilities of ritual magicians, this ritual creates a charm to attract a suitable romantic partner. The magician performs an hour-long ritual to empower the charm, which must be carried by the client. If the ritual is successful,

will meet a suitable person within 3d days. On a critical success, the potential partner is absolutely ideal for, and the magician gets some hint of how the client will know that person. On a failure, nothing happens. A critical failure attracts someone who *seems* right, but ultimately is bad for the client (a member of a hostile tribe, someone who's already married, etc.)

Note that this ritual does not guarantee love or romance, it only provides an opportunity. Because the ritual attracts a suitable person, it does provide a +8 on that person's initial reaction roll toward the client.

## *Predict Weather*

### *Defaults to Unmodified Path of Luck*

As per p. B157. Time to cast: 10 minutes per day forecast.

## *Rain Dance*

### *Defaults to Path of Luck-5*

This ritual increases the probability of a desired climate change. The ritual affects an area, but does not use the area modifiers on p. 79. Instead, a successful ritual will affect a radius of 1/2 mile for Herbalists, 1 mile for Dreamers, and 1.5 miles for Shamans. For every point the ritual roll succeeds, add +1 to the chance of the desired weather. The GM must decide the normal chance of the weather condition happening in the first place, and convert the percentage to a 3d roll (use the chart on p. B45). Obviously mild weather conditions (like fog or light rain) are more likely than severe ones (like thunderstorms, hurricanes, or snow in warm weather). The effects of the ritual occur within 12 hours; if the caster wants them to happen sooner, he is at -1 for each hour he wants to subtract from the total; when reduced to one hour, each minute subtracted increases the penalty by -1. Having the weather change occur one minute after the ritual is complete puts him at -70!

## *Seeker*

### *Defaults to Path of Luck-5*

This ritual can be used to find people, objects, and lost or stolen souls. The ritual lasts 10 minutes, and its effects apply to one person (who may or may not be the caster). On a success, every 2 points the ritual roll was made by (minimum of +1) give the recipient a +1 to any search rolls (using Alertness, IQ, Area Knowledge, or any other applicable skills) relating to the ritual's target. This bonus acts as a “gut feeling” indicating whether the searcher's efforts are aimed in the right direction, increasing the likelihood that the search will be successful. The effects of the ritual last until the object or person is found, or until 2d days have passed without success.

## *Summon Herd/Pack Defaults to Path of Luck-5*

As per *Beast-Summoning*, p. B155, but used to call a herd or pack, and Time to Cast is one hour for each 10 miles of radius affected. Buffalo dreamers can only summon buffalo, wolf dreamers only wolves, elk dreamers only elk, and so on. The animals will not attack the caster (who cannot attack them without canceling the spell), and react at +1 to anyone with the appropriate Guardian spirit, but are not under the caster's control.



## **True Weapon**

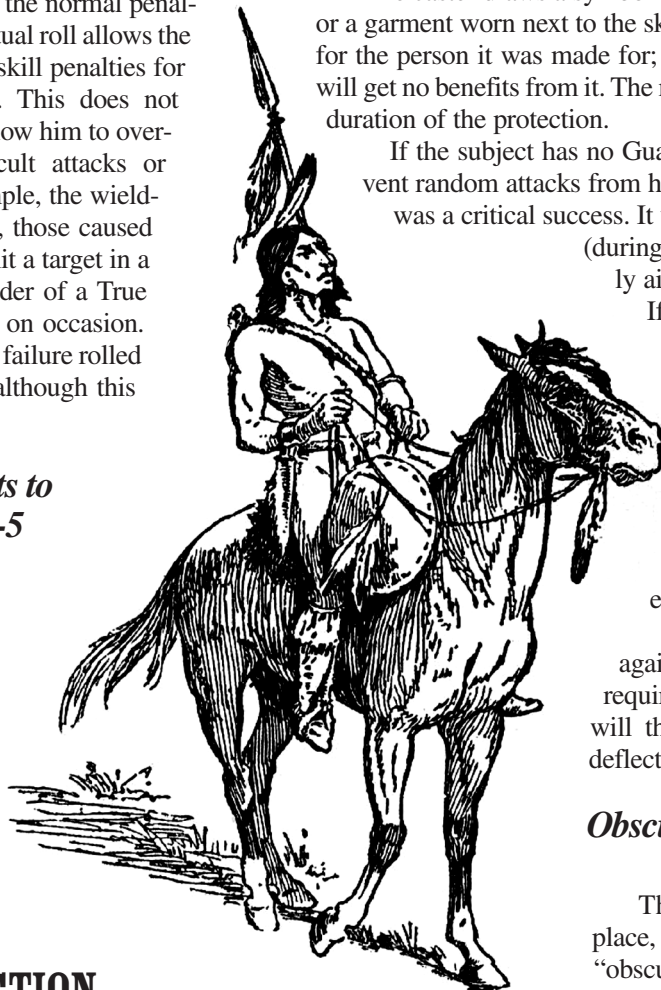
## **Defaults to Path of Luck-6**

True Weapon makes a melee weapon or missile more efficient in combat, and is usually performed as a four-day dance to bless every arrow owned by a band, or cast on individual lances (one hour, penalty of -1 per lb. of the weapon's weight). Duration is determined normally, and the magician can cast the ritual over multiple weapons by taking the normal penalties for multiple targets. A successful ritual roll allows the weapon's wielder to ignore 1 point of skill penalties for every 2 points the roll succeeds by. This does not increase the wielder's skill, but does allow him to overcome penalties to make more difficult attacks or maneuvers with the weapon. For example, the wielder could reduce penalties for visibility, those caused by pain and injury, or the penalties to hit a target in a specific location. This allows the wielder of a True Weapon to achieve "impossible" feats on occasion. The ritual also changes the next critical failure rolled with the weapon to a normal failure, although this ends the effect of the ritual.

## **Vision of Luck**

## **Defaults to Path of Luck-5**

This divination ritual shows whether good or bad luck awaits the subject in the future. Results are usually vague, and describe what may happen if the subject picks a course of action. On a successful roll, the caster will get an answer to a question pertaining to the consequences of an action. The answer will tend to be simple, preferably limited to one or two words or a short answer.



# **THE PATH OF PROTECTION**

Protection ceremonies keep spiritual or physical threats away from the subject.

## **Chaperone**

## **Defaults to Path of Protection-5 or Path of Luck-3**

See *Path of Luck*.

## **Firewalker**

## **Defaults to Unmodified Path of Protection**

Subject becomes immune to the effects of "ordinary" fire, heat, cold, or ice (see pp. B129-130). Thunder Dreamers use this 10-minute ritual to keep their vows, which forbid the use of utensils no matter how hot the food.

## **Ghost Shirt**

## **Defaults to Path of Protection-7**

This ritual works to turn away bullets, spears, and other ranged attacks by reducing the chances that they will hit someone. Since most war injuries result from random events

(shrapnel, fire that is not aimed at a particular person, etc.), the spell will be very effective at keeping people from being hurt in combat, but will do little in the way of defending them from attacks deliberately aimed at them. Furthermore, it is not the caster's but the recipient's link to the supernatural that determines the effectiveness of this ritual!

The caster draws a symbol on the subject's skin (war paint) or a garment worn next to the skin. The garment will only work for the person it was made for; anybody who steals the amulet will get no benefits from it. The modifiers on p. 73 determine the duration of the protection.

If the subject has no Guardian Spirit, the ritual will prevent random attacks from hitting him, unless the attack roll was a critical success. It will not affect deliberate attacks (during a duel, or if a sniper specifically aims at the subject, for example).

If the subject has a Guardian Spirit, it protects him from random attacks completely (no attack that wasn't specifically intended to hit him will ever hurt him – he will never be an "innocent bystander" or hit by "friendly fire"), and even deliberate attacks are at -3 to hit.

This ritual does not protect against hand-to-hand attacks, which require a deliberation and effort of will that magic rituals cannot easily deflect.

## **Obscurity**

## **Defaults to Path of Protection-6**

This ritual, cast on a person, place, or object, renders the subject "obscure," less likely to be noticed or found by others. This is not invisibility; the subject is still visible, but others are more likely to overlook it. In effect, the subject of the ritual (which takes 10 minutes to perform) gains +1 to Stealth and related skill rolls for every point the magician makes the ritual roll. Objects affected by this ritual provide a similar bonus to Holdout skill. Places affected by Obscurity apply a penalty equal to the ritual's success to skills like Area Knowledge when it comes to unwanted people finding or entering them. People walk past the odd house on the corner without even noticing it's there, and tend to avoid it even when it's pointed out to them.

## **Sanctuary**

## **Defaults to Path of Protection-4**

This very powerful area-effect ritual (see p. 79), when cast at a high enough Power level, virtually guarantees that no hostile rituals or spirit entities will enter the protected area. The caster determines the Power of a sanctuary. Subtract this Power from any ritual roll directed across the ward's boundaries, or from the Will of a spirit attempting to enter or leave the area (the



spirit must roll against his modified Will to penetrate the barrier). In addition to normal duration and area penalties, the ritual is at -1 per 2 Power levels of the refuge. Wards can be as powerful as the medicine man can make them.

Sanctuaries are not impregnable, however. Hostile spirits can slowly wear them down and eventually break through. For every (Sanctuary Power level) Fatigue points that a spirit spends, the spell's Power drops by 1, for that spirit only. If (Power level) spirits all manage to reduce a ward's Power by 1, then the overall level is reduced for every spirit or hostile ritual!

Once a ward is set up, a new one cannot replace it unless the first is removed by another ritual (which takes 10 minutes). This means that a group besieged by hostile spirits cannot keep recasting the Sanctuary ritual to keep them out. The casters of the original ritual can check the state of the spell by making an unmodified Path of Protection roll: they will perceive it as an energy sphere, and can sense any weakening in it.

**Vitality**      *Defaults to Path of Protection-4 or Path of Health-3*

See *Path of Health*.

## THE PATH OF THE SPIRIT

This Path deals with rituals relating to the spirit world, and is more useful in a high-magic campaign. For more rituals, see *GURPS Spirits*.

**Banish**      *Defaults to Path of the Spirit-4*

This ritual drives out any spirits foreign to the subject, ending any possession or control of the subject. The ritual takes three hours, and is only possible at close range; it involves blowing tobacco smoke into the ears, nose, and mouth of the patient to drive the spirits out. It is resisted by the Will of the spirit, and the possessed subject must be restrained in some way.

## RITUAL MODIFIERS TABLE

<i>Element</i>	<i>Bonuses/Penalty</i>
<b>Time</b>	
Reducing time to 1d+2 minutes	-2 to ritual roll
Reducing time to 1d seconds	-5 to ritual roll
Taking normal amount of time	No bonus/penalty
Repeating ritual daily for several days <sup>1</sup>	+1 for every two days
Extending ritual (three times required time)	+2 to ritual roll

### Consecrated Ground

No consecrated ground	-5 to ritual rolls
Makeshift consecration (1d-minute ceremony)	-1 to ritual rolls
Consecrated ground	No bonus or penalty
Old mystic area (20 years or more)	+1 to ritual rolls
Traditional worship site (50 years or more)	+2 to ritual rolls
Historical ritual place (100 years or more)	+3 to ritual rolls
Timeworn religious center (500 years or more)	+4 to ritual rolls
Truly ancient ritual space (over 1,000 years old)	+5 to ritual rolls

## Material Components

### *Symbolic Representations of Target:*

None	-6 to ritual rolls
Minimal (drawing, true name)	-2 to ritual rolls
Small belonging/piece of clothing	No bonus or penalty
Target is present at the ceremony	+4 to ritual rolls

### *Mystic Symbols:*<sup>2</sup>

No Symbols	-3 to ritual rolls
Minor symbols	No bonus or penalty
Powerful symbols	+1 to +3 to ritual rolls

### *Sacrifices:*<sup>3</sup>

No sacrifice	No bonus or penalty
Self-sacrifice	+1/2 hit points lost
Other sacrifices	+1 to +5, depending on ritual 3

## Multiple-Targets Modifiers<sup>4</sup>

<i>Size of Group</i>	<i>Roll Penalty</i>	<i>Size of Group</i>	<i>Roll Penalty</i>
2 to 5	-4	201-500	-26
6-10	-8	501-1,000	-30
11-20	-12	1,001-5,000	-34
21-50	-14	5,000-20,000	-38
51-100	-18	20,000-50,000	-42
101-200	-22	51,000-100,000	-44

+ every doubling thereafter is an additional -4

## Area Modifiers

<i>Area</i>	<i>Modifier</i>
5 yards or less	no modifier
5 to 10 yards	-1
10+ yards (to 100 yards)	-1 per 10-yard increase (-10 for a 100-yard radius)
101 to 200 yards	-1 per 25-yard increase (-14 for a 200-yard radius)
200+ yards	-4 per 100-yard increase

## Duration Modifiers

<i>Length of Time</i>	<i>Modifier</i>
Up to 12 hours	no modifier
Up to 1 day	-2
Up to 1 week	-4
Up to a month	-8
Additional months (to 1 year)	-4 per month (-52 for a full year!)
Each additional year	-4 per year



1. Ritual dances usually lasted 4 or 8 days.
2. Symbols include medicine bundles, costumes, Navajo sand paintings (see *Symbol Drawing*, p. C1147), rattles, music, etc.
3. Sacrifices vary according to tribe and ritual. Sacrifices of furs and food are common; potlach may be part of a sacrificial ritual. Pawnee perform human sacrifice, giving +5 to rituals.
4. Multiple-targets modifiers can be halved if the targets are participating in the ritual (dancing, singing, etc.). The modifiers are doubled by any unrestrained participants or spectators on the consecrated ground who are actively opposed to the ritual; sacrificial victims tied to stakes don't count.



## CHAPTER 5

# GUNFIGHTING

*"Frank, did you ever shoot someone **not** in the back?"*

*– Johnny Ringo to Buckskin Frank Leslie*

Showdown or shootout, shot in the dark or shot in the back, gun battles ended lives and expanded the frontier.





# GUNFIGHTING IN THE REALISTIC CAMPAIGN

Clay “the Corpsemaker” Allison and Chunk Colbert, two of the West’s most famed gunfighters, sat opposite each other in the Colfax County Inn, stirring their coffee with the muzzles of their revolvers. They reholstered their pistols and began eating. When Colbert reached for his coffee with his left hand, Allison went for his gun. Colbert, who’d been drawing his pistol under the table, fired too soon and his shot went into the edge of the table. Allison shot him over the right eye and continued eating. When asked why he’d sat down to eat with Colbert, who’d ridden from Colorado to New Mexico just to shoot him, Allison replied, “Because I didn’t want to send a man to hell on an empty stomach.”

The Allison-Colbert shootout was typical of Western fast-draw contests, which usually happened at close range inside a saloon, as when Johnny Ringo shot a man for ordering beer instead of whiskey. The managers of the Oriental and Dexter Saloons in the lawless silver town Panamint City installed a wall of sheet iron between their establishments to prevent wild shots hitting anyone in the other saloon. When gunfighters took their arguments outside into the street, they usually did so with their guns already in their hands, and often emptied their revolvers at each other without hitting the mark.

While some of the West’s legendary gunfighters were skilled marksmen, many others were terrible shots, and the “Code of the West” was rarely honored. Jesse James once fired at an unarmed bank teller at point-blank range and missed. While robbing a train, he emptied his revolver at a man from a close distance without a single hit. Wild Bill Hickok, Jesse James, Morgan Earp, and Pat Garrett were all shot in the back; Billy the Kid, Virgil Earp, and “Old Man” Clanton were ambushed; and some outlaws were shot while asleep.

When gunfights or ambushes occur in realistic campaigns, the GM should be generous with penalties for speed, range, vision, unfamiliarity, adverse conditions, and intoxication. (see pp. CII64-66, CII162-168.) GMs should also remember that while shootouts were common in the Old West, many more disputes were settled with fists than with guns.

## WEAPONS

Generally, firearms before the Civil War require the Black Powder Weapons skill; later weapons require the Guns skill. All muzzle-loaders (ML) and cap-and-ball (CB) weapons are covered by the Black Powder Weapons skill. The Guns skill applies to any firearm that takes metal cartridges, including the later breech-loading long arms, magazine rifles, Smith and Wesson revolvers (SW), and Colt cartridge revolvers (CR).

Smoothbore weapons – muskets and shotguns, for example – are relatively easy to make, clean, and repair. Rifled weapons have spiral grooves in the barrel which spin the ball for a longer, more accurate flight. Carbines are the cavalry models of longarms. Their shorter barrels make them easier to fire from horseback.

Black powder is the only gunpowder available until the very end of the century. It’s commonly used as an explosive as well (see sidebar, p. 82).

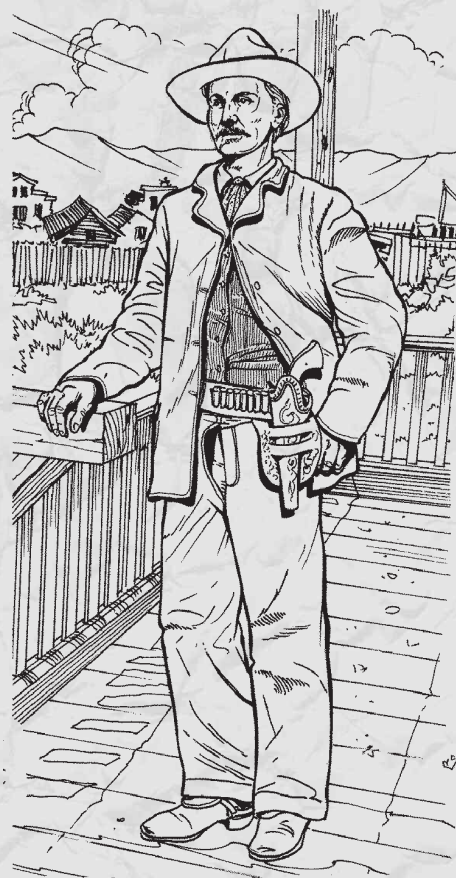
The well-equipped gunner has a powder horn, cap pouch, and bullet bag; a cap pouch and over-the-shoulder cartridge box containing 40 cartridges; or a cartridge belt with 50 cartridges.

## FAMOUS SHOOTOUTS

After an argument over a card game in Deadwood, Turkey Jack Johnson and two miners went outside to shoot it out. Johnson stood at one end of the cemetery, the miners at the other 50 yards away, and they walked toward each other. The miners each emptied one revolver in the first 10 yards and drew another. Johnson fired one shot at 30 yards, killing one miner. The second miner fired another three shots before Johnson, still not hit, felled him with his second shot.

An amazing use of Fast-Draw skill took place in Dodge City’s Oriental Saloon in 1879, when Charley Storms got the drop on Luke Short and began stroking Short’s mustache with his Peacemaker. Short drew his own Colt and fired three times, and Storms died without pulling the trigger. In a fight in ’87 with Longhair Jim Courtright, Short shot off Courtright’s thumb while he was cocking his revolver, then shot him in the chest and forehead while he was drawing another gun.

Samuel Strawan once made the mistake of trying to shoot Wild Bill Hickok in the back – unaware that Hickok could see him in a mirror. Hickok drew, turned around, and fired first, shooting Strawan in the head and killing him instantly.

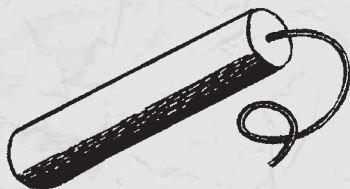




## EXPLOSIVES

*Black powder* is a common explosive through most of the 19th century. One pound does 6d damage.

*Nitroglycerine* was invented in 1846. A jarred vial of nitro explodes on a 12 or higher. Only a 3 or 4 prevents explosion if the nitroglycerine is exposed to fire. Eight ounces does 3dx3 damage.



*Dynamite* was invented by Alfred Nobel in 1866. It is a compound containing nitroglycerine; impact or fire does not make it explode. Old dynamite “sweats,” oozing its nitroglycerine. The GM decides what die roll will set off old dynamite if it is jarred. Dynamite can also be detonated normally with fuses; electrical ignition is available after 1870. It takes a turn to cap or fuse a stick, and a turn to light the fuse. Wire or fuses can be run 1 yard per turn. It takes 2 seconds to hook the wire into an electrical detonator, 1 second to charge the detonator, and 1 second to push or turn the plunger. Quick fuse burns at 2 yards per second; slow fuse takes 5 seconds to burn one *inch*.

A 1/2-lb. stick of dynamite does 5d-2 damage; a half stick does 3d. Electrical blasting caps do 1d-2 by themselves, with a minimum of 1 hit.

## USING EXPLOSIVES

The Demolition skill (p. B65) is required to use explosives safely – especially important when throwing dynamite. A short fuse may kill the thrower, while a long one will let the target get away or even throw it back. Thrown nitroglycerine explodes on impact, but on a critical miss the thrower and anyone nearby is blown to pieces instead.

The sale and transport of nitroglycerine and dynamite was prohibited in various parts of the country through the 1870s. Of course, black markets thrived. Daredevils bought it in Mexico or Canada and sold at a high profit to mining camps, railroad projects, and quarries.

See pp. B121-122 and pp. CII64-65 for Explosives rules.

## LOADING BLACK POWDER WEAPONS

Loading a smoothbore with powder and ball takes 45 seconds standing, 55 sitting or kneeling. Paper cartridge loading takes 20 seconds standing and 35 sitting or kneeling. Loading on horseback requires an additional roll against Riding skill-3; time is as for sitting.

Loading a rifled weapon with loose powder, ball, and greased patches takes 40 seconds; without patching, 60 seconds; cartridges take 30 seconds.

Loading a flintlock with a paper cartridge takes 20 seconds. A rifled weapon requires 30 seconds. A percussion weapon loads in 15 seconds.

Taking three times as long to load the gun carefully adds +1 to effective skill. Speed-Load (Black Powder Weapons) reduces time by 10%. A failure adds 10% to normal loading time. A critical failure drops or damages the ammunition or jams the gun.



## FIREARMS IN MELEE

Fighters may have to strike or parry with their guns. Critical failure indicates a damaged or discharged weapon (GM’s choice). A damaged weapon can not be fired until repaired. Roll a die to determine the direction of a discharged shot. Use the rules for hitting the wrong target (pp. B117-118), *beginning with the shooter*. No dodge is allowed.

**Pistols:** Use the Blackjack skill for damage equal to Thr, or the Mace skill for Sw. A weapon over 2 lbs. adds +1 to damage; over 4 lbs. adds +2. Knuckledusters are the only stingy pistols useful in melee; see p. 87.

**Long arms:** Use the Staff or Mace skill for muskets and rifles without bayonets. Weapons between 4 and 8 lbs. do Sw+2 damage; heavier ones do Sw+3. Use the Spear skill for bayonets.



## AMMUNITION

Fifteen lead balls or cartridges weigh about a pound. A pound of black powder provides 100 charges. Seven to ten cartridges make a handful.

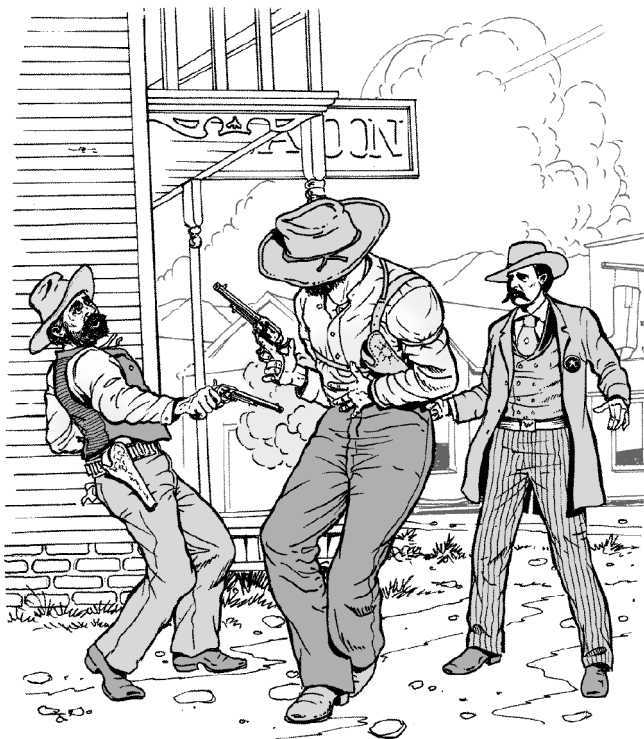
**Powder and shot:** Flintlocks use black powder and lead balls. To ensure high velocity, balls must fit tightly and be forced down the barrel with a ramrod. Rifled barrels require tighter fits and either greased wadding or much hammering.

**Paper cartridges:** Paper cartridges with pre-measured powder and a lead ball make loading easier. The gunner tears open the cartridge, pours the powder into the barrel, and uses the paper as wadding.

**Cap and ball:** Percussion weapons have caplocks. Loose powder and a ball are loaded into the muzzle or, with a revolver, directly into the chamber. A percussion cap goes over a nipple under the hammer and ignites the powder when struck.

**Shot:** A shotgun's "gauge" is the number of lead balls, equal to the barrel's diameter, that add up to 1 lb. in weight – the gun may be loaded with anything this size or smaller. Small pellets are called birdshot. Buckshot is for larger game. Rifled slugs become available in the 20th century.

**Pinfire cartridges:** These cartridges are introduced in 1836. The cartridge case is usually paper, but a metal head holds the primer. When the trigger is pulled, a small pin at the base of the shell strikes the cartridge, firing the charge. Loading requires exact pin placement.



**Rimfire cartridges:** Introduced in 1857, the rimfire case head has a small projecting rim containing priming powder. Impact on the rim fires the charge. Smith and Wesson's Model 1 pistol and the famous Henry repeater use rimfire cartridges.

**Centerfire cartridges:** The centerfire cartridge, first used in 1861, stores primer in the center of its metal case head. Spent cartridges can be reloaded after use. Most weapons in the last quarter of the century fire these.

## MOUNTED COMBAT

**One-handed Weapons:** Any one-handed weapon, such as a saber, tomahawk, or spear, can be thrust or swung from horseback. Apply -2 to damage if fighting from horseback without stirrups. Critical failure to hit while mounted requires a Riding roll to stay on the horse, in addition to any other result.

**Lances:** Indian and Mexican lances are lighter than those described on pp. B136 and B206. Indian lances are 6 to 7 feet long. They are always thrust from under the arm, never hurled or used overarm. If fighting bareback, treat a lance as a spear, for thrusting only – the mount's ST doesn't affect the combat. Mexican cavalry lances are less than 12 feet long and do thrust+1 damage, based on the horse's ST (see p. B136). Lances can become stuck (see sidebar, p. B96); the wrist loop adds +3 to the ST roll to retrieve the lance. Critical failure requires a Riding or a Lance skill roll (whichever is lower) to avoid being dragged off the horse.

**Ranged Weapons:** Firing from horseback modifies the chance to hit based on the horse's effective Move; the Speed/Range Table (p. B201) determines the penalty. A galloping horse's Move is usually 12, for a -5 to the rider's weapon skill – in addition to any modifier for the target's speed and range.

**Falling Off:** When falling from a horse, roll against Riding or Equestrian Acrobatics to determine the severity. Success indicates a non-dangerous fall; failure indicates the rider takes 2d-8 damage on soft to normal ground. Use the *Hit Location from a Fall* table (p. B131) if desired.

Critical failure means the rider's foot is caught in a stirrup. Damage is taken as for a 2-yard fall. A DX, Riding, or Acrobatics roll to free the foot may be attempted each turn. Failure results in 1 point of damage for each 3 hexes of speed. This "widowmaker" accident ended the lives of many cowboys, dragged to death behind panicked horses. Critical failure should be treated as a trample attack (p. B142).





# WEAPON DESCRIPTIONS

The following weapons are typical of those available in the Old West. For weapon stats, see the *Weapon Table*, pp. 88-90. For more information and detailed rules on these and other weapons of the period, see *GURPS High-Tech*.

## MUZZLE-LOADING LONG ARMS

Muzzle-loading (ML) flintlocks were the primary weapons of the early 19th century. They misloaded, misfired, and jammed. Caplocks superseded flintlocks by the 1830s, but a few stubborn shooters kept to flint.

### *Indian Musket, .58*

The fur companies traded Indian muskets – also called “trade” guns – for furs and other goods until after 1850. The barrels ranged from 30 to 42 inches; hunters often traded long-barrelled muskets to Indians for a stack of pelts as high as the gun. The Indian musket was used through the 1800s.

### *Kentucky Rifle, .45*

Early pioneers favored this long-barreled, light, and accurate rifle, also known as the American and Pennsylvania rifle. Some Kentucky rifles were used in the Civil War. They could not take a bayonet, and were not sturdy enough to use as a club or staff (1/3 chance of breaking).

### *Plains Rifle, .50*

By the mid-1820s, percussion, or caplock, Plains rifles – also known as Mountain rifles – with heavy barrels 28 to 38 inches long replaced earlier flintlocks.

### *Enfield .577 and Springfield .58*

The British Enfield was a common Confederate weapon. The Springfield .58, standard issue for Union soldiers, is so similar that ammunition is interchangeable. These single-shot muzzle-loading rifles have percussion locks. The Enfield has a 39-inch barrel and brass mountings. The Springfield has a 40-inch barrel and iron mountings. Either may take an 18-inch bayonet.

## BREECH-LOADING LONG ARMS

The first breech-loaders (BL) appeared around 1850. They could be loaded while sitting or kneeling as easily as standing.

Breech-loading weapons can be loaded in 4 to 6 seconds. Paper cartridge breech-loaders load in 6 seconds. Metal cartridge breech-loaders load in 4.

### *Sharps Rifle, .52*

This caplock rifle takes paper cartridges; the trigger guard opens and closes the breechblock. Metal cartridge Sharps are available from 1867 – use the same stats except Malf crit; 1/2D 700; Max 3,000.

### *Sharps Carbine, .52*

The Sharps carbine is a shorter-barreled version of the rifle. In 1859, a metal cartridge model becomes available – use the same stats except Malf crit; Acc 8; 1/2D 400.

The 1859 Sharps Coffee Mill carbine has a coffee grinder with a detachable crank in the stock. Coffee beans go in a hole on the top of the stock and ground coffee comes out a slot on the side.

### *Springfield Trapdoor, .45-70*

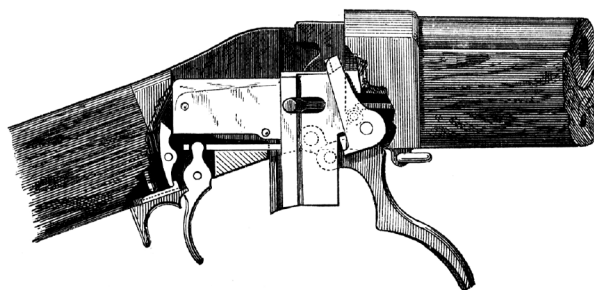
The Army used this single-shot breechloader throughout the Indian wars. The cavalry used Springfield carbines beginning in 1870. Stats are as for the .45-70 except Damage 5d-3; SS 13; Acc 7; 1/2D 500; Max 1,700; Wt 7; HO-5.

Army-issued cheap copper-cased ammunition tended to cause jams, particularly in rapid fire – a contributing factor to Custer’s defeat at the Little Bighorn. On a “jam” result, a stuck case has to be pried out with a knife; 2d seconds to clear.

An earlier version of the Springfield is .50-70 caliber. Use the same stats as the .45-70 except Acc 7; 1/2D 600; Max 1,900. The .50-70 was a popular civilian caliber, particularly among buffalo hunters – the government sold them as surplus for \$2.

### *Sharps Big 50, .50-90*

The Sharps Big 50 was the favorite of affluent buffalo hunters, though the herds had almost vanished by the time it appeared.



## MAGAZINE RIFLES

Most repeating rifles have magazines that can hold multiple cartridges. Tube magazines are inserted into the stock. The spring-loaded door in the side of the Winchester’s built-in magazine requires one second per round to load.

### *Henry, .44*

The popular Henry repeater uses .44-caliber rimfire cartridges. A trigger-guard lever action ejects spent casings, chambers a fresh round, and cocks the gun. The magazine is pulled out and loaded from the front. It takes two seconds to pull out, one per round to load, and one to close. Wells Fargo issued Henrys to some of its stagecoach guards, including engraved models presented to heroic employees. If dropped or used as a club, the Henry has 1/3 chance of breaking.



## Spencer Carbine, .56

The Spencer fires metal cartridges; it takes six seconds to insert a loaded magazine into the stock. Loading a magazine takes two seconds to open the magazine, one second per round inserted, and two seconds to close. Working the lever-action trigger guard when firing ejects the spent cartridge and chambers a new round. The side hammer must then be cocked. As many as 200,000 Spencer rifles and carbines were used in the Civil War. By 1869, the Spencer had been superseded by the Winchester.

## Winchester WD, .44-40

Available in rifle and carbine, the Winchester is stronger than its predecessor, the Henry. Rifle magazine capacity is 17+1, carbine 13+1. The '66 can be topped up at any time, even with a round in the chamber. It was produced through 1898.

## Winchester '73, .44-40

This is Winchester's most popular rifle; more than half a million were sold by 1900. Originally .44-40, later versions take the .38-40 cartridge (3d-2, after 1880) and .32-20 (2d, in 1882). The '73 is available in many barrel lengths, with capacities from 17+1 to 6+1.

## Winchester '76, .45

In 1876, Winchester sold a larger version of the '73. It was available in several barrel lengths and magazine capacities from 6+1 to 13+1.

## SHOTGUNS

Shotguns were designed for hunting. These smoothbore guns take small pellets for birds and small game, or buckshot for deer and other large game. Breechloading hammerless double-barreled shotguns – much like modern shotguns – appeared by the 1870s, and modern shotshells by 1880. Stagecoach guards and emigrants preferred shotguns; the shot spreads out, compensating for poor aim caused by lurching vehicles.

Single barrel weapons have a RoF of 1/L, while the more popular double barrel weapons have a RoF of 2/L. Firing both barrels simultaneously avoids the Rcl modifier: this increases the ST of the weapon by 25% and the Rcl by 50%, rounded up. The gauge determines the Damage, Recoil and minimum strength (ST):

Type	Damage	Recoil	ST
8-gauge:	5d+2	-5	15
10-gauge:	5d	-4	14
12-gauge:	4d	-3	13
16-gauge:	3d	-3	12
20-gauge:	3d-2	-3	11

## J.F. Abbey Muzzle-Loading Shotgun

These are typical percussion-lock single-barrel and double-barrel muzzle-loading shotguns; similar models (mostly made in Europe) were available from the 1830s on.

## Remington Single-Barrel Shotgun, 16g

This is a typical cartridge-firing breech-loading single-barrel shotgun. Similar models include the Greener Single-Barrel (12g), Howard Brothers Single-Shot (1866, 20g) and Stevens Tip-Up (1877, all gauges).

## Colt Model 1878 Hammer Shotgun

This is a typical (and very popular) cartridge-firing breech-loading double-barrel shotgun, available in 10g and 12g. Similar models include the Enterprise Double-Barrel (1862, all gauges), Remington Model 1874 (1874, 10g and 12g), and Winchester Imported Side-by-Side (1879, 10g and 12g). Sawing off the barrels makes Holdout -5; sawing stock and barrels gives Holdout -3. Doc Holliday took a sawed-off double to the O.K. Corral, and Hickok carried one while marshal of Abilene.

## MUZZLE-LOADING PISTOLS

At the start of the 19th century, most pistols were flintlock one-shot muzzle-loaders. Many of them, converted to percussion locks, saw use in the Civil War. Use the stats for Flintlock Pistol, .51, or Wogdon Pistol, .45, on p. B208.

## REVOLVERS

Early "cap and ball" (CB) revolvers use percussion caps, black powder, and lead balls. It takes 10 seconds to load each chamber with a paper cartridge or 15 seconds with loose powder and ball. Replacing a cylinder with a pre-loaded one takes 30 seconds, although not all models allow this. Placing a cap requires one turn per chamber. Carrying out any of these actions while performing other actions requires an Armoury roll. Shooters cannot load loose powder and ball while performing any other action.

Loading Colt metal cartridge (CR) revolvers takes up to 14 seconds: one to open the gun, two per chamber to eject the cartridge and load a round, and one to close the chamber. The Smith & Wesson loading system (SW) takes nine seconds for a six-shooter – one second to open the gun, one to empty all the cartridges, one per round inserted, and one to close.

LeMat revolvers (LeM) have two separate loading systems. The revolver part of the 1856 version is like a Colt cap and ball revolver (CB), while the shotgun is a breech-loader. In the 1875 model, the shotgun remains a breech-loader, but the revolver uses the Colt metal cartridge (CR) revolver loading system. A switch moves the hammer to one or the other, taking one second.

Most revolvers in the Old West are single-action pieces – the hammer must be cocked prior to every shot. This rotates the cylinder, bringing a fresh round under the hammer. Double-action weapons draw the hammer back, rotate the cylinder, and release the hammer with one pull on the trigger. Nineteenth century double-action weapons have stiff triggers, and are -2 to effective skill. Cowboys dismissed them as "not worth a row of beans" and suitable only for dudes.



Few revolvers in the Old West have safety catches. Careful gunmen carry their weapons with the hammer down on an empty chamber.

### ***Pepperbox***

These short multi-barrel weapons (some fire directly from the cylinders) were popular with gamblers and rivermen; one Sharps four-barrel model sold 150,000 in 20 years, and copies were produced until 1968. Pepperboxes are inaccurate beyond a few feet, but are ideal for holdups or settling disputes across a card table. The barrels may rotate or be stationary with a rotating firing pin; a malfunction may spread the flash to the other barrels, causing a hail of bullets. Also available in .22 – use the same stats except Damage 1d-2, ST 9.

### ***Colt, Dragoon, .44***

The power of this 14-inch handgun approaches that of military rifles. Some models have a detachable wooden stock. This costs 50% more; Acc is +2 with the stock. The Dragoon was manufactured until 1860 and was widely imitated in the Confederacy.

### ***Colt, Walker, .44***

The Dragoon was preceded in 1846 by the even more massive Walker, 1.5 inches longer, half a pound heavier, and even more powerful; use Dragoon stats, but increase damage to 2d+2 and Weight to 4.5, Holdout -3. Only a few were made, and almost all went to the Army. Walkers are made of inferior steel and many burst in service; any natural 18 bursts a Walker for 1d damage to the firer.

### ***Colt, Navy, .36***

The 1851 model is the most popular. Confederates like the Navy; Union soldiers prefer the heavier .44 Army model. Robert E. Lee kept a Navy Colt in his saddlebags, and Wild Bill Hickok carried a pair in his sash.

### ***LeMat, .42***

These “grapeshot pistols” are a combination revolver and scattergun. The revolver holds nine shots. Below the revolver barrel is a breech-loading .60-caliber (18-gauge) smoothbore scattergun. The overall length is about 14 inches.

The LeMat isn’t readily available until 1860. The early cap and ball version, produced through 1865, is popular with Confederates. Stats of a later metal cartridge model are as for the earlier version, except Malf crit; Damage 2d, 1/2D 150, Max 1,600. The scattergun stats remain unchanged. Cost is \$22.

### ***Smith & Wesson, Model 1, .22***

These cartridge revolvers are dependable and easy to conceal. To reload, the cylinder must be completely removed and the empty cartridges punched out.

### ***Colt, Army, .44***

The Colt Army Model 1860 revolver, a much smaller version of the Dragoon, is the most popular handgun of the Civil War.

### ***Smith & Wesson, Model 2, .32***

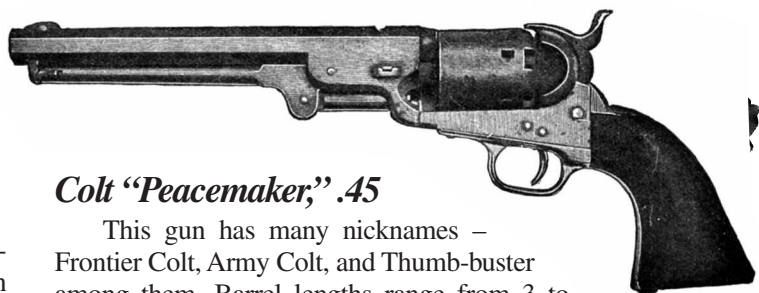
This is a larger version of the Smith & Wesson Model 1.

### ***Webley Bulldog, .450***

A British double-action revolver. Custer carried a pair to the Little Bighorn.

### ***Smith & Wesson American, .44***

The first Smith & Wesson pistol to be ordered by the U.S. Army. Buffalo Bill owned a pair, and the Russian army adopted it as their service revolver. Differences between the S&W Russian and S&W American revolvers are minor, and .44 Russian and .44 American ammunition can be used in either gun. The initial run of S&W Americans had 8-inch barrels; later models had barrels as short as 4 inches.



### ***Colt “Peacemaker,” .45***

This gun has many nicknames – Frontier Colt, Army Colt, and Thumb-buster among them. Barrel lengths range from 3 to 7 1/2-inches. The Colt Cavalry model has a 7 1/2-inch barrel. The Colt Artillery style has a 5 1/2-inch barrel. A civilian model with a 4.75-inch barrel is ideal for fast draws. Some are fitted for shoulder stocks, adding +2 to Acc and increasing cost by 50%. The “house” or “storekeeper’s” models have 3-inch barrels to allow for easy concealment (Holdout +2).

The Peacemaker is tremendously powerful. Stats on the table are for the standard Army load of 28 grains of powder and a 250-grain bullet. A 40-grain powder load makes Damage 3d-2 and Rcl -3. In 1878, Colt began producing revolvers chambered for the Winchester .44-40 rifle cartridges. For .44-40, use the Damage and range stats for the Colt Dragoon.

Peacemakers were used by Bat Masterson, Custer’s men at the Little Bighorn, and both sides at the O.K. Corral; they were also used to kill Jesse James, Billy the Kid, and Pat Garrett.

In 1877, Colt produced a double-action version of its Colt Army .45. It cost about \$20, and has a RoF of 3.

### ***Remington, .44-40***

This 6-shot, single-action revolver was almost as popular as the Peacemaker. Frank James robbed banks with one. Styles range from plain blued steel to pearl handles and fancy gilt engraving for about \$45.

### ***Smith & Wesson Schofield, .45***

Jesse James used a Schofield, and Wells, Fargo issued them to employees. Though not as popular as the Peacemaker, it was preferred by some cavalry and other riders because it was easier to reload while on horseback.



### ***Colt Lightning, .38***

Lighter than the Peacemaker, Colt's other double-action revolver, the Lightning came with barrels as short as 2 inches (Holdout +1). American Express issued them to their couriers.

### ***Colt Thunderer, .41***

This is a .41 caliber model of the Lightning. Many were issued to police; it sold better in eastern cities than the west, but Billy the Kid and John Wesley Hardin used them.

### ***Smith & Wesson D.A. Frontier, .44-40***

These revolvers are the first to have the familiar Smith & Wesson look. They have 6-inch top-ribbed barrels with break-open actions and nicely shaped grips.

## **STINGY PISTOLS**

These small pistols, ideal for concealment, are called "stingy" because of their less-than-generous size. The first popular one was produced by Henry Deringer, a Philadelphia gunsmith. Other manufacturers copied the design, adding a second "r" to their "derringer" pistols to avoid lawsuits. Stingy pistols are most effective at close range.

### ***Deringer, .44***

The classic Deringer is a percussion pistol. The large-caliber, wrought iron barrel may be anywhere from one to four inches long. The overall lengths are 3-3/4 inches for the vest-pocket size to 9 inches for the greatcoat-pocket size. The mountings are German silver or gold.

### ***Colt One-Shot, .41***

This Colt derringer has a stud trigger, which pops out of a notch when the gun is cocked.

### ***Remington 2-Shot, .41***

The Remington Double-derringer is the gambler's companion. It has double-decker 3-inch barrels. \$18 buys a fancy one with ivory or pearl stocks and engraving.

### ***Reid Knuckleduster, .32***

The Knuckleduster shot directly from the chamber, like many pepperboxes. Its ring grip made it a good knuckler for fist fighting. It came in three calibers – .22, .32, and .41. The .22 has seven shots, with Damage 1d-2; 1/2D 10; Max 200. The .41 has five shots, with Damage 1d+ and all other stats as for the .32-caliber model. Knuckledusters lost their popularity by 1880.

### ***Colt Cloverleaf, .41***

This revolver's four chambers join at the center and resemble a four-leaf clover. Leaving the chambers unaligned with the barrel is a safety precaution and prepares a cylinder for loading

or unloading. In this position, the gun is fairly narrow and ideal for hiding in a pocket. The Cloverleaf's trigger emerges when the gun is cocked. The gun comes with a 3-inch or 1 1/2-inch barrel. Overall length is 7 inches.

## **MACHINE GUNS**

Nineteenth-century machine guns are shot by turning a crank or moving a lever to fire rounds and eject spent cartridges; they tend to jam. RoF depends on skill – maximum RoF is Gunner/2. The Gatling and Hotchkiss guns operate similarly; familiarity modifiers are -1 for operation, -4 for repair.

### ***Gatling, .58***

The Gatling has reloadable steel chambers, each separately primed with an external percussion cap. These chambers are dropped into a hopper on the top of the gun. The six rotating barrels, turned by a hand crank, pick up a chamber, fire it and then eject it for reloading. The mechanism frequently jams.

In 1865, Gatling introduces a modified gun for a .58 caliber rimfire cartridge. Range and damage are as for the earlier gun, except Malf 15. After 1873, the most common chambering for Gatlings is .45-70; Malf 16; range and damage as for the Springfield Trapdoor. In 1898, Gatling coupled his gun with an electric motor to make a weapon that fired 3,000 rounds a minute.

### ***Hotchkiss, .37 mm***

The common Hotchkiss is a 1.5-inch (37mm) cannon with five barrels; it takes solid shot ammunition. They are well-made and last for years. Most are wheel-mounted – ground-mounted Hotchkiss guns are uncommon but not unknown.

## **CANNON**



### ***Napoleon, 12-pounder***

The standard gun of both sides in the Civil War. It requires a crew of six; each shot costs \$10.

## **OTHER RANGED WEAPONS**

### ***Tomahawk***

The stats listed are for the "trade" tomahawk, manufactured for trade with Indians. Mountain men and others use them as well. See *Tomahawks and War Clubs*, p. 58.

### ***Bow***

This is primarily an Indian weapon – few whites in the Old West used them. See *Bows and Arrows*, pp. 58-59.



## Arkansas Toothpick

The second-most popular knife of the frontier, the Arkansas Toothpick has a straight pointed blade with a double edge. It is primarily a fighting blade – with stats as for the Bowie knife (below) – but its balance and symmetry make it suitable for throwing as well.

## Lasso

A lasso, or lariat, may be made of oiled rawhide, hemp, or linen. Texas cowboys favor 30 to 40 foot lassos; Californians and other cowboys on the open range prefer them longer. See pp. 34-35.

## Whip

Bullwhips can crack like a revolver shot, audible two miles away if the wind is right. A well-handled whip can flick a speck of blood from the tough ox skin, causing the ox to “hump up and almost go through his yoke,” or take a piece out of someone’s trousers without breaking the skin – if he will only bend over and let him try it.

## HAND WEAPONS

### Bayonet

It takes four turns to draw and fix a bayonet to the end of a gun; they cannot be used on carbines. Loading a muzzle-loader

with a bayonet takes an additional 3 seconds. Shooting a weapon with a bayonet attached is at -1. The thrusting bayonet, with an 18-inch triangular blade, can be used as a large knife, but only for thrusting attacks. Sword bayonets are used on short firearms such as rifles – they make long arms too muzzle-heavy. Knife-bayonets are lightweight and useful for opening rations, cutting kindling, and other non-lethal purposes. Use the stats for a Bowie knife, except Reach is 2 when affixed to a gun.

### Bowie Knife

Bowie knives are large and well-suited for fighting and general utility work. They were extremely popular through the 1840s and '50s, and in the Civil War. Bowie knives are single-edged with a false edge running along the back for a few inches – this allows a backstroke in combat. They are rarely thrown; a genuine Bowie is balanced for throwing, but most copies were not.

### Saber

American cavalymen wear sabers during the Mexican War, the Civil War, the Indian Wars, and the Spanish-American war. The Model 1859 has a narrow and slightly curved blade, and weighs 2 lbs. Soldiers call it “Old Wrist-Breaker.” Cavalymen draw their sabers only when their guns are empty.

## WEAPON TABLE

### GUNS

Type	Malf	Damage	SS	Acc	½D	Max	Wt	AWt	RoF	Shots	Ld	ST	Rcl	Yr	Cost	Notes
<b>Muzzle-Loading Long Arms</b>																
Indian Musket, .58	14 <sup>1</sup>	4d+	15	6	200	2,500	10	–	1/L	1	ML	10	-2	1720	5	SB
Kentucky Rifle, .45	14 <sup>1</sup>	5d+	15	7	400	3,700	7	–	1/L	1	ML	10	-2	1750	6	SB
Plains Rifle, .50	16 <sup>1</sup>	5d+	14	7	400	3,700	15	–	1/L	1	ML	11	-3	1800	5	SB
Enfield, .577 or Springfield, .58	16 <sup>1</sup>	4d+	15	8	700	2,100	8.5	–	1/L	1	ML	10	-2	1853	10	Per
<b>Breech-Loading Long Arms</b>																
Sharps Rifle, .52	16 <sup>1</sup>	5d+	15	7	500	3,000	9	0.5	1/L	1	BL	11	-2	1851	12	
Sharps Carbine, .52	16 <sup>1</sup>	5d+	13	7	350	2,000	6.5	0.3	1/L	1	BL	10	-2	1851	11	HO-4
Springfield Trapdoor .45-70	crit <sup>2</sup>	5d+	15	8	700	2,100	9	–	1/L	1	BL	11	-2	1873	12	
Sharps Big 50, .50-90	crit <sup>2</sup>	6d+	15	7	600	3,300	11	0.11	1/L	1	BL	12	-3	1875	17	
<b>Magazine Rifles</b>																
Henry, .44	crit <sup>4</sup>	2d+1+	13	6	250	1,900	10	1	0.64	15+1	Tube	10	-1	1862	17	HO-5
Spencer Carbine, .56	crit <sup>4</sup>	4d+	13	6	300	2,100	10	1	.3	7+1	Tube	10	-3	1863	18	HO-5
Winchester WD, .44-40	crit <sup>4</sup>	2d+1+	13	6	250	1,900	7.1	2	.8	17+1	Win	10	-1	1866	18	HO-5
Winchester '73, .44-40	crit <sup>4</sup>	3d+	13	7	300	2,200	7.1	2	var.	var.	Win	10	-2	1873	20	HO-5
Winchester '76, .45	crit <sup>4</sup>	4d+	14	7	500	2,500	7.25	2	var.	var.	Win	10	-2	1876	22	HO-5



Type	Malf	Damage	SS	Acc	.5D	Max	Wt	AWt	RoF	Shots	Ld	ST	Rcl	Yr	Cost	Notes
<b>Shotguns</b>																
Muzzle-loading shotgun	15 <sup>1</sup>	var	13	5	25	150	7	var.	var.	1/L or 2/L	ML	var.	var.	1871	7	Per, HO-5
Remington Single Barrel	crit <sup>2</sup>	3d	13	5	25	150	6.5	.1	1	1	BL	12	-3	1863	15	HO-5
Colt Model 1878	crit <sup>2</sup>	var	13	5	25	150	7.5	var.	2~	2	BL	var.	var.	1863	15	HO-5

#### Muzzle-Loading Pistols – see p. B208

#### Revolvers

Pepperbox, .32	16 <sup>3</sup>	1d-1	12	1	40	250	1.5	.1	1	4-7	CB	10	-1	1837	6	SB, HO
Colt, Dragon, .44	16 <sup>3</sup>	2d+1+	11	2	150	1,500	4	.3	1	6	CB	12	-3	1848	6	HO-1, F
Colt Navy, .36	16 <sup>3</sup>	2d-1	9	2	120	1,300	2.5	.25	1	6	CB	10	-1	1851	6	HO, F
LeMat, .42	15 <sup>3</sup>	2d-1+	11	1	130	1,500	3.5	.37	1	9	LeM	11	-2	1856	17	HO-2, F
scattergun	crit <sup>2</sup>	3d	11	4	10	50		.05	1/L	1		11	-4			
S&W, Model 1, .22	crit <sup>4</sup>	1d-1	9	3	40	900	1	.05	1	7	SW	9	-1	1857	6	HO+1, F
Colt Army, .44	crit <sup>4</sup>	2d+	12	1	130	1,500	2.75	.3	1	6	CB	11	-2	1860	14	HO
S&W, Model 2, .32	crit <sup>4</sup>	1d+1	10	2	120	1,200	2	.1	1	6	SW	10	-1	1861	10	HO, F
Webley Bulldog, .450	crit <sup>4</sup>	2d-2+	11	1	120	1,400	2.5	.3	3~	5	SW	10	-2	1867	20	HO
S&W American, .44	crit <sup>4</sup>	2d+1+	11	2	150	1,700	2.5	.3	1	6	CR	11	-2	1873	13	HO, F
Colt “Peacemaker,” .45	crit <sup>4</sup>	2d+1+	11	2	150	1,700	2.5	.3	1	6	CR	11	-2	1873	10	HO, F
Remington, .44-40	crit <sup>4</sup>	2d+	11	2	160	1,800	2.5	.3	1	6	CR	11	-2	1875	15	HO, F
S&W, Schofield, .45	crit <sup>4</sup>	2d+1+	11	2	150	1,700	2.5	.3	1	6	SW	11	-2	1875	13	HO, F
Colt Lightning, .38	crit <sup>4</sup>	2d-1	11	1	120	1,300	2.25	.2	3~	6	CR	10	-1	1877	13	HO
Colt Thunderer, .41	crit <sup>4</sup>	1d+1+	11	1	120	1,200	2.25	.2	3~	6	CR	10	-1	1877	13	HO
S&W, Frontier, .44-40	crit <sup>4</sup>	2d+	12	1	160	1,800	2.5	.3	3~	6	SW	11	-2	1880	15	HO

#### Stingy Pistols

Deringer, .44	15 <sup>1</sup>	2d-1+	10	1	10	300	.5	–	1/L	1	ML	11	-2	1850	2	HO+2
Colt One-shot, .41	crit <sup>2</sup>	1d+	9	1	15	400	.25	–	1/L	1	BL	10	-1	1856	3	HO+3
Remington 2-shot, .41	crit <sup>3</sup>	1d+	10	1	15	400	–	.5	2	2	BL	10	-1	1856	5	HO+2
Knuckleduster, .32	crit <sup>4</sup>	1d-1	9	1	15	250	.5	.09	1/2	5	SW	10	-1	1866	7	HO+3, sap
Colt Cloverleaf, .41	crit <sup>4</sup>	1d+	10	1	15	350	.5	.07	1	4	CR	10	-1	1870	9	HO+2,F

#### Machine Guns

Gatling, .58	14 <sup>5</sup>	4d+	–	4	700	2,100	390	11	Spec.	100	Mag	–	-1	1862	120	
Hotchkiss, 37mm	16 <sup>5</sup>	10d++	–	4	700	2,100	280	–	Spec.	100	Mag	–	-1	1874	250	

#### Cannon

Napoleon, 12-pounder	16	6dx8	–	3	600	1,800	2,600	–	1/20	–	–	–	–	1855	\$3,000	
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## OTHER RANGED WEAPONS



(This is not a complete list; for additional weapons, see p. B207.)

Weapon	Type	Damage	SS	Acc	1/2D	Max.	Cost <sup>1</sup>	Wt <sup>2</sup>	ST	Notes
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#### AXE THROWING (DX-4)

Tomahawk (metal)	cut	sw+1	10	2	ST 1.5	ST 2.5	1	2.5	8	
Tomahawk (stone)	cr	sw+1	11	1	ST	ST 1.5	.25	3	9	

#### BOW (DX-6) 2 hands to fire, 2 turns to ready

Short Bow	imp	thr	12	1	ST 10	ST 15	1	2	7	Max. dam. 1d+3
Regular Bow	imp	thr+1	13	2	ST 15	ST 20	1	2	10	Max. dam. 1d+4

#### KNIFE THROWING (DX-4)

Arkansas Toothpick	imp	thr	12	0	ST-2	ST+5	2	1	7	1
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#### LASSO (No default)

Lasso	Special	Special	16	0	–	–	8	3	–	See pp. 34-35
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## HAND WEAPONS



(This is not a complete list; for additional weapons, see p. B206.)

Weapon	Type	Amt.	Reach	Cost	Wt	ST	Notes
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#### BAYONET (DX-5 or Spear-1)

Thrusting Bayonet	imp	thr+3	2	1	1	9	4 turns to fix.
Sword Bayonet	cut	sw+1	2	2	1.5	9	4 turns to fix. May be used as a sabre.
	imp	thr+2	2				





Weapon	Type	Amt.	Reach	Cost	Wt	ST	Notes
<b>FENCING (DX-5)</b>							
Saber	cut imp	sw thr+1	C C,1	5	2	7	Thrust: Maximum damage 1d+2; may be used with Shortsword skill.
<b>KNIFE (DX-4)</b>							
Bowie Knife	cut imp	sw-2 thr	C,1 C	2	1	–	Throwable.
<b>AXE/MACE (DX-5)</b>							
Tomahawk (metal)	cut	sw+1	1	1	2.5	8	May be thrown.
spike	imp	sw	1	1	2.5	8	
<b>WHIP (No default)</b>							
Bullwhip	cr	sw-2	1-7	\$5	6	10	See p. B52.

## READING THE WEAPON TABLE

(See also *Ranged Weapons*, pp. B114-122; *Critical Tables*, p. B202.)

**Malf:** The die roll on which the weapon can malfunction. The superscript note next to the malf number indicates consequences of malfunctions for that weapon type:

1. Normal malfunction. A *flintlock* must be re-primed, requiring five seconds. For a *percussion weapon*, the cap must be replaced (2 seconds). If two malfunctions occur in a row, the charge must be drawn and the weapon reloaded (drawing a charge takes twice as much time as loading). A dud or weapon jam on the Firearm Critical Miss Chart (p. B202) also requires drawing the charge.

2. When a *breech-loading* metal cartridge weapon malfunctions, the round is a dud. Reload single-shot weapons; for repeaters, work the action.

3. Normal malfunctions with *cap and ball revolvers* indicate dud rounds; the cap must be replaced, taking two seconds. With a critical malfunction, a roll of 16 or 17 on the Firearms Critical Miss Table (p. B202) indicates that an additional chamber discharges. A chain firing handgun startles the shooter (roll vs. Will or be stunned for 1d turns).

4. A critical miss is the only way these weapons malfunction. Roll on the Firearm Critical Miss Table (p. B202).

5. Malfunctioning machine guns require 2 to 12 seconds of repair (Gunner skill). Critical failure – or three successive failures – jams the weapon beyond field repair. Any unrealistic result on the Firearms Critical Miss Table means a jam.

**Damage:** The number of dice of damage that the weapon inflicts. + or ++ means a caliber-based *wounding modifier* applies to remaining damage after subtracting DR: “+” means multiply by 1.5, “++” means double remaining damage.

**SS:** The Snap-Shot number, the final to-hit number necessary to avoid a snap-shot -4 penalty.

**Acc:** The weapon’s Accuracy modifier. See p. B15.

**1/2D:** The range at which the weapon’s Acc drops to zero and the damage is halved.

**Max:** The weapon’s maximum range.

**Wt:** Weight of the loaded weapon in pounds.

**AWt:** Weight of the listed amount of ammunition including any detachable magazine, etc. *Wt.* minus *AWt.* is empty weight.

**RoF:** The weapon’s rate of fire. When there are two numbers, the second is the delay (in turns) until it can be fired again.

An L indicates that the weapon must be reloaded before it can be fired again. Each successive shot has the full recoil penalty. Non-repeating shotguns can have a RoF of 1/L or 2/L, representing one-or two-barreled versions.

**Shots:** The number of shots a weapon holds when ready for action. Some are followed by +1, indicating an additional round can be kept in the chamber. Most revolvers have six chambers, but careful gunners loaded only five and kept the hammer down on an empty to prevent accidental firing; safety catches weren’t introduced to revolvers until the 1880s.

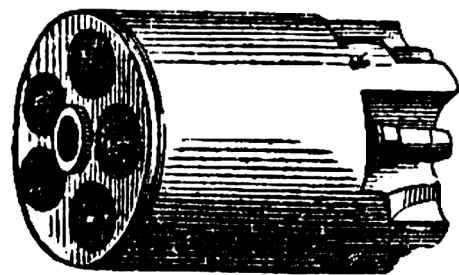
**Ld:** Loading system; muzzle-loading (ML), breech-loading (BL), tube magazine (Tube), Winchester magazine (Win), cap-and-ball (CB), LeMat (LeM), Smith and Wesson revolvers (SW), Colt metal cartridge revolvers (CR), or detachable magazine (Mag). See *Weapons*, pp. 84-87, for more information.

**ST:** The minimum strength needed to avoid a turn readying the weapon after firing, and extra recoil penalties.

**Rcl:** The weapon’s recoil penalty. See p. B120.

**Yr:** The year the weapon first became available.

**Cost:** Typical cost of the weapon between 1860 and 1880. Weapons produced before 1850 are more expensive in the first half of the century. Most become less expensive with time.



### Notes:

**Per:** Percussion muzzle-loaders – all other muzzle-loaders are flintlocks.

**SB:** Smooth-bore weapons – double all size and range penalties.

**HO:** Holdout modifier for any attempt to conceal the weapon. Weapons with no HO modifier cannot normally be concealed.

**sap:** Pepperboxes and knuckledusters are useful in close combat, adding +2 to damage done with a fist.

**F:** The weapon can be fired by Fanning or Slipping the Hammer. See pp. CI133, CI135.



## CHAPTER 6

# THE WARS

The 19th century was a turbulent time. This chapter provides background for character creation – and a reference to times and places when Westerners might find themselves caught up in war!

## THE WAR OF 1812

In the very early 1800s, the British interfered with U.S. shipping and “impressed” U.S. sailors – that is, abducted them from their own vessels and put them to work on British warships, claiming they were deserters from the Royal Navy. Britain also supported Indian attacks on U.S. frontier settlements as a cheap means of protecting the Canadian boundary.

Many Americans, including the group called the “War Hawks,” thought that war with Britain offered a chance to expand into Canada and Spanish Florida. New England, dependent upon trade with Great Britain, opposed the war and fostered a separatist movement. War was finally declared on June 18, 1812.





## THE MEXICAN ARMY: 1835-48

The *presidial* companies garrisoned the frontier – these are the ones seen most often in the movies. They wore blue jackets with red collars and cuffs, gray trousers buttoned along the seam, and broad-brimmed black hats. They fought with saber, carbine, and lance.

The Mexican Army had equally colorful infantry and cavalry, as well as militia dressed in peasant white.



## THE TEXAS NAVY

Mexicans and Texans skirmished throughout the Republic's 10-year history, but some of the most spectacular battles took place in the Gulf of Mexico.

In 1838, the Texan Congress voted for a navy, and by 1839, Commodore Edwin Ward Moore, late of the U.S. Navy, was building one. By April 1840, Moore had seven ships – a 20-gun sloop-of-war, a 5-gun steamship-of-war, a 16-gun brig, a 14-gun brig, and three 5-gun schooners. Most of the officers and men were from the U.S. Navy.

Moore achieved some stunning naval victories, including the only recorded victory of sail over steam. With only the sloop *Austin* and the brig *Wharton*, Moore engaged two Mexican steamships-of-war, which retreated when heavily damaged. An engraving on Moore's Colt Navy revolver commemorated the battle.

The U.S. Navy absorbed the Texas Navy in 1846.

The U.S. Army proved inept, soundly losing some early battles and failing to make any headway into Canada. The U.S. Navy boosted sagging morale by capturing several British merchant ships. In 1813, U.S. Commodore Oliver Perry won Lake Erie. The British landed at Bladensburg, Maryland, in August 1814, and marched to Washington, D.C. The U.S. government fled before the British, who burned the city.

The United States and Britain, tired of indecisive warfare, signed the Treaty of Ghent on December 24, 1814. News was slow to travel, and General Andrew Jackson thrashed the British at the Battle of New Orleans in January 1815, before he learned that the war was over.

The War of 1812 weakened Indian resistance in the Northeast and northern Midwest, ended U.S. dependence on Europe, and fostered American feelings that the United States equalled the major European powers.

## THE WAR BETWEEN MEXICO AND TEXAS

In 1821, Mexico won its independence from Spain and Stephen F. Austin established his 18,000-square-mile colony near San Antonio. Texas territory rolled westward from Louisiana to the foothills of the Rockies, and rose northward from the Gulf of Mexico to the Staked Plains tableland. Its eastern half was fertile, swampy near the Gulf, with pleasant woods and prairies watered by the Red, Sabine, Brazos, Colorado, Nueces, and Rio Grande rivers. Deer, buffalo, and many other animals were plentiful.

American settlers poured into Austin's colony, promising loyalty to Spain in hopes of making their fortunes farming this promising land. The farmers cleared their own fields, built their own cabins, fended off the Karankawa Indians with their own muskets, and began to prosper. A newly independent Mexico increased each settler's allotment sevenfold and forgave all taxes for six years as the farmers established themselves.

By the 1830s, the 30,000 "Texicans" outnumbered the Mexicans four to one and were growing rich on cotton harvests as the population continued to swell. But Mexico had been in turmoil since its independence, and President Bustamante was intent on control. He sent troops to Texas, where they skirmished with the Texicans in 1832. Eventually General Santa Anna deposed Bustamante.

In 1833, a convention of settlers at San Felipe (Stephen F. Austin's own settlement) supported Santa Anna. Austin visited Mexico City, hoping to secure Mexican statehood for Texas. Put off for nearly three months, Austin lost his patience and wrote to a friend that "this country is lost if its inhabitants do not take affairs into their own hands." Santa Anna got the letter and imprisoned Austin, then planned to punish Texas.

The Texans were angry; some began a secessionist faction. Fighting began in earnest in 1835 when the hot-headed William Travis attacked a Mexican garrison without provocation in June. Local skirmishes ended in large Mexican losses, small Texan losses, and Mexican surrenders. Austin (out of prison by now) and Jim Bowie led an attack near Mexican-controlled San Antonio, then Colonel Milam took the city in December. Santa Anna stormed up from Mexico with 6,000 soldiers, and the final months of the war began with the siege of the Alamo in February of 1836 (see sidebar, pp. 110-111).



Texas declared itself an independent republic on March 2; Santa Anna overran the Alamo on March 6. Sam Houston fled east with 375 men, searching for a defensible position, and finding the Texans more and more willing to provision and join him as he went. Santa Anna narrowly missed capturing the Texan government at Harrisburg, then decided to destroy Houston's army, now 800 strong and in friendly territory at the Galveston bayous.

Santa Anna finally halted at Lynch's Ferry near San Jacinto. On April 20th, the Mexicans sighted Houston's forces and built barricades through the night. The Texans quietly surrounded the exhausted, dozing soldiers the next day and attacked suddenly, shouting "Remember the Alamo!" The fight reads like the Alamo in reverse. Although Santa Anna's soldiers far outnumbered the patriots, they were surrounded with no hope of reinforcements. The Mexicans couldn't retreat – Texans blocked the roads and the bayous were impassable. Two Texans died and 23 were wounded; 600 Mexicans died and 650 were taken prisoner, including Santa Anna, who was eventually released.

## THE MEXICAN WAR

In the decade after Sam Houston bested Santa Anna, most nations recognized Texas' independence, but Mexico still claimed the territory. On March 1, 1845, the U.S. accepted Texas' proposal to join the Union; Mexico promptly severed diplomatic relations. President Polk offered to buy Texas and California as well as the New Mexico and Utah Territories from Mexico (see map, p. 94) and sent Brevet Brigadier General Zachary Taylor to the Rio Bravo del Norte (the Rio Grande) to support the U.S. claim to Texas. In April 1846, Taylor skirmished with Mexican troops, then moved south into Mexico, winning at Palo Alto and Resaca de la Palma. The U.S. declared war on May 13.

Mexico was internally disorganized from the beginning of the war. Generals could not agree on plans and undirected soldiers frequently offered no resistance to advancing U.S. troops. The United States, believing that defeating Mexico utterly was the only way to loosen its grip, launched a triple attack. Taylor and Scott bedeviled Mexico from the north and the coast while Kearney conquered everything from Kansas to California.

*The War in Mexico* – Taylor drove south into Mexico in May 1846 and won the three-day battle of Monterey in September. Toward the end of February 1847, he defeated Santa Anna at Buena Vista, forcing him to retreat. General Winfield Scott's 10,000 troops landed at Vera Cruz in March 1847 and forced the fort's surrender with a heavy naval bombardment.

Scott encountered Santa Anna and 6,000 soldiers at Cerro Gordo ("Big Hill") Pass on the road to Mexico City. The U.S. won the pass in two days, despite the soldiers' having to haul the artillery uphill by hand. Santa Anna fled west, leaving his men to surrender, retreat, or die. Scott followed him inland, and ransacked one of his estates on the way, seizing, among other things, a military payroll and a wooden leg rumored to be Santa Anna's own.

As the Americans made their unopposed way west, Santa Anna sued for peace – fortifying the capital should politics fail.

Scott's tired men seemed no match for the 30,000 Mexican soldiers, the mountains, marshes, lakes, lava fields, and fortified hills waiting in the Valley of Mexico, but Taylor won the capital in five grueling battles from August 20 through September 14. Santa Anna fled, leaving 9,000 leaderless troops within the city walls. The city government surrendered, and a new national government agreed to terms with the United States.

## THE TEXAS RANGERS

This mounted volunteer force was formalized in 1835. Three companies of 25 men "ride like Mexicans, shoot like Tennesseans, and fight like the very devil." The Rangers put down lawlessness and guarded the Republic's frontier against Indians. In the Mexican War, they were scouts and guerilla fighters, earning a reputation for bravery and effectiveness. They fought Cherokees and Comanches in the late 1850s – and plundered a bit on the side. They fought with the Confederates during the Civil War, then controlled outlaws, feuding groups, and Mexican marauders. They became a permanent force in 1874 – six companies of 75 men dealt with rustlers and other outlaws throughout Texas.

Although they were a police force, the Rangers did not drill, salute officers, or wear uniforms or insignia. They furnished their own arms and horses, and they all used six-shooters.



Their motto, "One riot, one Ranger," came from a famous story. The mayor of a west Texas town, anticipating trouble, wired the Rangers for help. Two days later, a single Ranger got off the train with his Winchester, Colt, and bag. "Where's the rest of them?" cried the mayor, "I asked for a company." "Why, so you did," replied the Ranger, "but there's only one riot, ain't there?"

The Rangers are still in existence today, and are among the most prestigious law-enforcement agencies in the world.



After 1866, the U.S. had 10 cavalry regiments, each with 12 companies, or troops. A colonel headed the regiment and a captain led each company of 50 to 100 privates.

Dragoons during the Mexican War used smoothbore muzzle-loading percussion carbines and sabers. Some tested the Walker Colts, and many provided their own revolvers.

*Continued on next page . . .*

*Outcome* – Throughout the Mexican War, 10 Mexicans fell for every American. The War spawned several U.S. military innovations: a regular mounted rifle regiment; “Mexican Spy Companies” that scouted and gathered information; and repeating hand guns (Colt Dragoons and Walkers) for the troops.

# THE CIVIL WAR

This map illustrates the territorial growth of the United States between 1823 and 1860. It shows the following territories and states:

- Territories:** Washington Territory (1853), Oregon (1859), Nebraska Territory (1854), Kansas Territory (1854), Utah Territory (1850), New Mexico Territory (1850), Minnesota (1858 Terr. 1849), Wisconsin (1848), Iowa (1846), Missouri (1820), Arkansas (1836), Louisiana (1803), Florida (Terr. 1822).
- States:** Maine, New Hampshire, Massachusetts, Rhode Island, Connecticut, New York, Pennsylvania, New Jersey, Delaware, Maryland, Virginia, North Carolina, South Carolina, Georgia, Alabama, Mississippi, Tennessee, Kentucky, Ohio, Indiana, Illinois, Michigan (1837), Wisconsin (1848), Minnesota (1858 Terr. 1849), Iowa (1846), Missouri (1820), Arkansas (1836), Louisiana (1803), Florida (Terr. 1822).
- Acquisitions:**
  - Treaty Line of 1846
  - Ceded to U.S. by Mexico 1848
  - Part of Oregon Territory 1848-1853
  - Gadsden Purchase 1853
  - Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo 1848
  - Ceded to U.S. by Texas 1850
  - Annexed 1837
  - Public Strip
  - Various part of: Michigan Terr. (1834-1836), Wisconsin Terr. (1836-1838), and Iowa Terr. (1838-1846)
  - Border established 1842
- Scale:** 100, 200, 300, 1000 Square Miles.
- Longitude:** 137° to 67° West.
- Latitude:** 25° to 45° North.



in the West. Southerners were anxious to maintain their position as an equal partner in the Union and were reluctant to change their way of life. The War between the States, declared in 1861, divided the nation, scarring it for decades. A few highlights will have to suffice for this book; histories of the war are easy to find, or see *GURPS Civil War*.

## THE PLAYERS

Here are the principals of the Civil War.

*Jefferson Davis* – championed Southern rights and economic development. A former U.S. Secretary of War, he became President of the Confederate government in February 1861. He became embroiled in his generals' arguments, and Lee surrendered without his approval.

*Ulysses Simpson Grant* – captured Fort Donelson in February 1862, the first major Union victory, and led the army in the West from October 1863. Grant won numerous battles from Pennsylvania to Mississippi, losing only a few, and accepted Lee's surrender.

*Robert Edward Lee* – was unsympathetic to slavery but loyal to his native state, and resigned his U.S. Army commission to command the Virginia army. Lee invaded the North, but failed to gain any ground. He became commander in chief in February 1865, too late to save the Confederacy. Both the North and the South admired his honesty and gallantry.

*Abraham Lincoln* – believed strongly in the Union and was determined to preserve it. His Emancipation Proclamation (1862) gave the war a moral tone; his Gettysburg Address (1863) expressed deep sorrow at the suffering the war caused. His second inaugural speech promised "malice toward none, charity for all." He was assassinated five days after Lee's surrender.

*William Tecumseh Sherman* – fought in Kentucky, Missouri, at Vicksburg, Tennessee, and Mississippi. He burned Atlanta, then marched to the sea at Savannah, destroying everything in his path. He razed his way north and trapped Lee between himself and Grant in Virginia, securing Union victory. Sherman later became commanding general of the U.S. Army.

## THE PLAYING FIELDS

The Confederacy typically kept to the defensive, seriously threatening the North only twice. The North needed to invade, capture, and hold many vital areas – it blockaded the coast and drove down the Mississippi River, trying to strangle the South.

*Bull Run (Manassas)* – The Union pushed back the Confederate forces holding the Manassas Junction rail hub (26 miles from Washington, D.C.) in July 1861. The Confederates, under "Stonewall" Jackson, routed the Union forces.

*Second Battle of Bull Run* – Lee pushed the Union forces back to Washington in August.

*Antietam (Sharpsburg)* – On September 17, 1862, Union soldiers attacked Lee near Antietam Creek, in the bloodiest single-day battle of the war. Lee retreated into Virginia.

*Gettysburg* – On July 1, after a 9-hour fight, Union troops withdrew to a highly defensible position. On July 3, George Pickett lost 9,000 of his 15,000 infantry during a charge on the central Union position. The Confederates withdrew to Virginia.

*Siege of Richmond* – Grant besieged the Confederate capital for 9 months in 1864.

## THE U.S. CAVALRY (CONTINUED)

The highly mobile cavalry was essential during the Indian wars. They carried breech-loading carbines, sabers, and revolvers (a Colt, Smith & Wesson, or Remington Army Model). The Army found the Winchester too delicate for the field. Scouts and other civilians with the army often brought their own weapons.

### OUTFITS

The cavalry wore waist-length woolen jackets over their shirts, dark blue tight woolen trousers (sky blue after 1863), black riding boots with brass spurs, and a sky-blue calf-length greatcoat. A red sash went under the sword belt and buckskin gauntlets protected the hands. Officers wore floppy Kossuth hats; soldiers wore forage caps. Heavy brass epaulettes (PD 3; DR 4) protected officers' shoulders from enemy sabers during the Civil War (Indian fighters didn't wear them). Each branch had its own color (on flags, trouser stripes, etc.) – yellow for cavalry, red for artillery, and blue for infantry.

Confederate uniforms were similar to Union issue, with a few differences. Officers wore dark blue trousers; enlisted men, sky blue. Officers wore gray frock coats. A yellow cavalry sash went under the sword belt.

Gray cloth ran out during the war and the Rebels began to wear home-dyed light brown clothing, earning the name "Butternuts."

## THE BUFFALO SOLDIERS

The black 9th and 10th U.S. Cavalry and 24th and 25th U.S. Infantry regiments, formed in July 1866, were led by Colonels Edward Hatch, Benjamin Grierson, and William Shafter, all of them white (Custer was offered command of the 9th, and refused it). The Indians called the black enlisted men "Buffalo Soldiers" for their tight, curly hair – the soldiers took pride in the name, and the 10th used the buffalo as the regimental emblem.

The Buffalo Soldiers earned a reputation as some of the best regiments in the army. The desertion rate was very low and the reenlistment rate very high, making them the most veteran. The Indians learned to fear them.

*Continued on next page . . .*

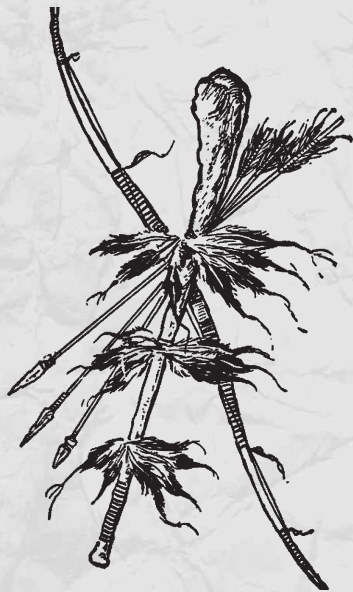


## THE BUFFALO SOLDIERS (CONTINUED)

The Buffalo Soldiers got the worst equipment and assignments. The 9th and 25th sweltered along the Rio Grande and fought the Apache in New Mexico. The 10th was originally posted to the Kansas and Indian territories, then transferred to West Texas.

Many whites, both Northern and Southern, viewed blacks as barely better than beasts. Whites unfamiliar with the Buffalo Soldiers' military reputation react at -2; those familiar with it react at -1. GMs may vary these reactions according to the strength of the individual's prejudice. Indians react to black soldiers as they react to white soldiers: well if they have been treated fairly, poorly if they have been treated badly.

As well as soldiers, cowboys, and settlers "Exodusters", the Old West also saw black trappers, explorers, gold miners, stagecoach drivers, Pony Express riders, con men, rustlers, gunslingers, and lawmen. Towns with all-black populations included Nicodemus and Boley, both in Kansas.



### SHADES OF GRAY

General Crooker wrote to President Lincoln, "I feel confident that if all the Indian outbreaks upon this continent were carefully examined and honestly probed to the bottom, the whole cause and origin would be found in the thievish and dishonest conduct of the government agency officers, traders and the vile confederates that procure their appointments and share their plunder and then gloss over and hide their iniquity."

Both Indians and whites ignored treaties, murdered, and tortured throughout the Indian Wars. Some Indians collaborated with the whites for money or to gain the advantage in intertribal power struggles. However, there were whites who protested the injustice of government policy and the depredations brought on by greed or hysteria.

*Burning of Atlanta* – The Confederate Army retreated from Atlanta on the night of August 31-September 1, 1864, and Sherman marched in. He evacuated the city on September 9 and burned it on November 15.

*Appomattox Court House* – Lee, caught between Sherman to his south and Grant to his north, surrendered to Grant on April 9, 1865.

## "BLEEDING" KANSAS AND QUANTRILL'S RAIDERS

The Civil War in the West had its roots in the Kansas-Nebraska bill of 1854, which permitted each state and territory to choose whether to allow slavery. Kansas, split between pro- and anti-slavery factions, formed two governments. Both sides raided, rioted, and murdered opponents. From 1862 on, rebel raiders harassed the Union forces and towns in Kansas and Missouri.

George Todd, David Pool, "Bloody Bill" Anderson, and William Quantrill led rebel raids. Quantrill's gang included the teenaged Jesse and Frank James. On August 21, 1863, his 450 men pillaged and burned Lawrence, Kansas, killing 150. They later disguised themselves as Union soldiers and surprised a Federal detachment, killing 90 men.

Quantrill died on June 6, 1865, during a raid on Louisville. His gang broke up into smaller bands and continued raiding after the war ended.

## GENERAL SIBLEY TRIES FOR THE WEST

The West, with its gold fields and ocean ports, was a tempting target for the Confederacy. The Union had reassigned most of the frontier soldiers to Eastern campaigns. The entire Department of New Mexico was guarded by a mere 3,810 men, who had their hands full with the Apaches. Brigadier General Henry Hopkins Sibley determined to secure the West for the Confederacy – with unfortunate results.

On February 7, 1862, he and 2,600 men marched from Fort Bliss, Texas, into New Mexico. Sibley took Valverde in a two-day battle on February 21. On March 23, he took Albuquerque and Santa Fe, but Northern reinforcements from California and Colorado pinned him at La Glorieta Pass. Sibley retreated to Texas, having lost 330 of his 337 supply wagons and 1,700 men – 1,200 of them to pneumonia and smallpox.

## THE OUTCOME

Of 1,556,000 Union soldiers, 23% died and 18% were wounded. Of 800,000 rebels, 32% died and 28% were wounded. Medical advances saved unprecedented numbers, but cost many limbs – after the war, amputees and one-eyed men were common. The total cost of the war for both sides was over \$15 billion in 1860s dollars.

The war saw a number of technological firsts: rifled ordnance and shell guns, ironclad warships, armored train cars, the machine gun, land and water mines, submarines, aerial reconnaissance (via balloon), and systematic medical care for the troops. The telegraph and railroad played significant roles. The soldiers voted in national elections, newspapers covered developments, and photographers recorded the carnage.





Confederates returning to their homes and farms were allowed to keep their uniforms for clothing, but not the insignia-bearing buttons. Many Union soldiers remained in the Army and went West to guard towns, wagon trains, and railroad crews; supervise land rushes; and man forts.

## THE INDIAN WARS

Throughout the century, cultural differences and competition for land brought wars between Indians and whites. Technology and numbers stacked the odds in the whites' favor. Intertribal animosities prevented any unified resistance.

### THE NORTHWEST

A measles epidemic began the Cayuse War of 1847. Twelve missionaries blamed for the sickness were killed and 50 whites taken hostage. The hostilities nearly resulted in a combined uprising of all the tribes of the Columbia Basin.

In the Yakima War of 1855, Columbia Basin tribes retaliated versus encroaching settlers. Army volunteers murdered Chief Peo-peo-mox-mox of the Walla Wallas, taking his scalp and ears. Army regulars tried to defend Indians from enraged whites.

The influx of miners and forced treaties united the Coeur d'Alenes, Spokanes, and Palouses against the United States in the Coeur d'Alene War of 1858. In May, 1,000 warriors routed a column of 164 federal troops. Colonel George Wright and 600 troops broke the allied tribes' power on the Spokane Plain and at the Battle of Four Lakes.

Later Northwest wars included the 1866-68 Snake War, the Modoc resistance of 1873, the Nez Percé War (see sidebar), and the Bannock War in 1878.

### THE SOUTHWEST

Some of the best-known conflicts occurred in the southwest. Cochise led his Apache raiders in the 1860s; Geronimo was the last Apache warrior chief. Kit Carson campaigned against Apaches and Navajos.

Fearful by Pueblo Indians, the Spanish, Mexicans, and Americans, Apaches terrorized the Southwest for most of the century. In 1837 a party of American trappers massacred their Mimbrenño Apache guests at a fiesta and sold the scalps. (By the 1860s, an Apache scalp could fetch \$250.)

The Civil War drew troops East, leaving Arizona to the Apaches. Their continual raiding drove whites out; only 200 remained in Taos. In 1863, Kit Carson fought to reopen routes between California and the east. By the end of spring, the Apaches were settled at Bosque Redondo ("Round Grove") in the Pecos River Valley. Whites gradually moved back, although raids continued for nearly 10 years.

In April of 1871, 150 Anglos, Mexicans, and Tohono O'odham Indians massacred more than 100 peaceful Apaches under the protection of Camp Grant. Outraged, President Grant established five agencies for the Apaches. Most of the Indians – including Cochise and his band – agreed to settle on reservations in return for regular supplies.

In 1875, the U.S. ordered all Apaches to the San Carlos reservation on the Gila River. Many fled. From 1877 to 1880, a Mimbrenño named Victorio and 80 warriors raided in Mexico, Texas, New Mexico, and Arizona, pursued by U.S. and Mexican troops. Victorio and more than half his band died in the Battle of Tres Castillos in 1882.

### THE NEZ PERCÉ WAR

In May 1877, the Nez Percé, who had never killed a white, were given 30 days to move from their ancestral homeland, the Wallowa Valley in northeastern Oregon, to a reservation. On June 12, three hotheaded young warriors out for revenge killed four whites known for intolerance to Indians. Fighting ensued, and within three days nearly 20 white settlers died. The Nez Percé fled east to White Bird Canyon in Idaho.

One hundred cavalry under General Oliver Howard rode to White Bird Canyon on June 17. The Indians sent out a truce flag, but a trigger-happy soldier took a pot shot at them. Expert Nez Percé marksmen killed 34 soldiers, with no Nez Percé losses.

General Howard's 600 cavalry hunted the fleeing Nez Percé through Idaho, Wyoming, and Montana Territories. Chief Joseph's band of 700 – including 550 women, children, and old men – often outdistanced and consistently outmaneuvered, outfought, and tricked the soldiers at each engagement.

Hoping for an alliance with the Crow, the Nez Percé headed for Montana. They traversed a dangerous cliff face in Lolo Pass in July, evaded an Army roadblock, got more supplies at Stevensville, then stopped to rest at Big Hole Valley, where 200 cavalry caught up with them on August 9th. The Nez Percé lost 89 and retreated south into Idaho. They successfully raided the Army at Camas Creek on August 20th, then startled vacationers as they fled through Yellowstone Park.

The Crow refused to help, and the Nez Percé headed for Canada, hoping for help from Sitting Bull. They bested the Army at Canyon Creek on September 13th, then straggled north for another two weeks. Most of their horses were lame. Some of their old and wounded opted to stay behind and accept their fate. They crossed the Bear Paw mountains and stopped to rest at the Snake River – 30 miles from the border.

On September 30, General Howard's and General Nelson Miles' cavalries attacked the Nez Percé camp. The surrounded Indians fought for days against howitzers and gatling guns, but by October 5 only 350 women and 80 men were left. That day, Chief Joseph rode slowly across the battlefield and surrendered, saying "I am tired of fighting . . . The old men are all dead . . . My people, some of them, have run away to the hills, and have no blankets, no food. No one knows where they are – perhaps they are freezing to death. I want to have time to look for my children and see how many I can find. Maybe I shall find them among the dead. Hear me, my chiefs. I am tired. My heart is sick and sad. From where the sun now stands, I will fight no more forever."



## NAVAJO

For the first half of the 19th century, Navajos and Mexicans traded raids. After the Mexican War, the U.S. Army protected settlers against the Indians, but didn't protect the Navajo against the Mexicans.

In the winter of 1846-47, 330 U.S. Volunteers tried to end the Navajo raids on Mexicans and Pueblo Indians. They had more difficulty with the terrain and the weather than with the Indians. The Navajo signed a treaty in 1847, but raided and counter-raided through the 1850s.

A January 1861 truce lasted until September 22, when a horse race between Navajo and army mounts ended in a riot. General James Carleton turned his attention from the Confederates to the Indian problem in 1862. The Navajo refused to move from their ancestral lands to Bosque Redondo, where their enemies, the Mescalero Apaches, had been resettled.

Beginning in June 1863, Kit Carson tried to subdue the Navajo by destroying their crops, herds, and villages. In January 1864 his men took Canyon de Chelly, the sacred Navajo stronghold thought impregnable. By the end of the year, 8,000 Navajo surrendered and were force-marched 300 miles across New Mexico in the "Long Walk."

The Navajos and Apaches at Bosque Redondo suffered from scarce supplies, disease, and tribal hostilities. In 1868, Carson persuaded Washington to grant the Navajos a reservation in their homelands in the Chuska mountains. They never warred on whites again.

## THE BUREAU OF INDIAN AFFAIRS

In 1824, Congress created a separate Bureau of Indian Affairs within the War Department to handle Indian affairs. Indian agents lived with a tribe or, where they could manage, two or more tribes. Most agents were frontiersmen: fur traders, missionaries, discharged army men. The Bureau provided agencies with interpreters, blacksmiths, carpenters, teachers, and farmers.

Despite reorganization in 1834, charges of fraud and graft plagued the Bureau. In 1849, the "Indian Service" was transferred to the Department of the Interior. Nearly 200 agents, subagents, and auxiliary personnel worked among the Indians. Dishonest agents in league with traders delivered only half the annuities, selling the rest.

While U.S. troops pursued Victorio's band, a Chiracahua Apache warrior named Geronimo led more than 75 followers from the San Carlos reservation to raid in Mexico. In April 1882, they returned and gathered more followers. The army recalled General George Crook from his campaign against the Sioux. Geronimo surrendered twice in the following four years, only to escape each time. Finally, General Nelson Miles and 5,000 soldiers pursued Geronimo and his 23 remaining raiders. After nearly six months of eluding the troops, Geronimo gave himself up and was sent in chains to Florida.

## GREAT PLAINS



In the fall of 1851, 10,000 representatives from nine Indian nations attended a conference at Fort Laramie. The Indians received gifts, and agreed to allow roads and Army posts in return for annuities of \$50,000 for 50 years (the Senate cut this to 10 years before ratifying the treaty).

In 1854, a Sioux named High Forehead killed a Mormon's stray cow. Despite promises of restitution, Fort Laramie sent 30 infantrymen and two cannon to arrest the man. When refused, the troops fired and were killed in the ensuing battle. A retributive attack killed 85 Sioux and captured 70 women and children.

In 1862, white traders supplied the Santee Sioux with moldy bacon and wormy flour, and the Sioux crops failed. In August, Little Crow and his warriors raided settlements and trading posts. Nearly 400 whites died the first day of the Minnesota Massacre. The Sioux killed whites for six weeks. The army's artillery finally scattered them at Wood Lake, September 23.

Early in the winter of 1864, Colonel J.M. Chivington reported having killed nearly 500 Cheyenne warriors at Sand Creek in eastern Colorado. In fact, his troops had massacred 123 – 98 of them women and children. Cheyenne, Arapaho, and Sioux chiefs joined to wage war on the whites.

In 1865, Sioux under Red Cloud, Sitting Bull, and Spotted Tail attacked army work parties and patrols along the Bozeman Trail and in Wyoming and Montana. In December 1866, Red Cloud and 1,500 warriors killed Captain Fetterman and 80 cavalrymen. Despite white victories, the Fort Laramie Treaty of 1868 abandoned the Bozeman posts when Red Cloud promised to halt the raiding. The government reserved western South Dakota, including the sacred Black Hills, for the Sioux. Gold brought illegal miners in 1874.

In 1876, Sitting Bull called every Sioux, Cheyenne, and Arapaho band, on the reservation or not, to gather at Rosebud Creek. Crazy Horse led 700 Sioux and Cheyenne warriors against General Crook's 1,000 soldiers (including 300 Crow and Shoshoni), driving them off. The Indians gathered in an enormous encampment at the Greasy Grass River – Little Bighorn to the whites. On June 25, 1876, they wiped out the overconfident George Custer's troops.

The Indian victory shocked the nation, and the army redoubled its efforts. Within a year, Crazy Horse led 1,500 braves in full war regalia onto a reservation. Sitting Bull led his people into Canada to escape the army in 1877, but surrendered four years later.

In November of 1890, officials banned the Ghost Dance cult (see sidebar, p. 63-64), for fear of another uprising. When the rites continued, troops moved in. Chief Sitting Bull resisted arrest, and was slain. Soldiers found Chief Big Foot and his band on their way to a reservation, and ordered them to make camp at Wounded Knee Creek. On the morning of December 29, as soldiers confiscated the Indians' weapons, a deaf Indian's rifle discharged. People started shooting and the Indians ran for cover. Soldiers opened fire with their Hotchkiss machine guns.



In less than an hour, more than 150 Indians, including many women and children, were dead. Colonel Forsyth, in charge of the command, was charged with the killing of innocents but exonerated. Except for a few isolated incidents, the Indian Wars were at an end.

## RANGE WARS

Violence plagued the heyday of the cattle kings, from 1866-1886. Rustlers, sheepmen, and barbed wire caused problems for ranchers during the conflicts known as Range Wars. (See the *Lincoln County War* and *Johnson County War*, p. 108.)

## RUSTLING

Rustlers stole ranchers' cattle and horses; vigilante committees of armed, mounted cattlemen punished the thefts. They often struck at night, setting fire to rustlers' cabins and shooting them as they ran out, or seized the sleeping men and lynched them at "necktie parties." Those left to twist in the wind often had papers reading "Horse Thief" or "Cattle Thief" pinned to them. Even the U.S. Army couldn't hold onto captured rustlers if the vigilantes wanted them dead – angry cowmen sometimes took prisoners right out from under the Army's nose.

## CATTLEMEN VS. SHEEPMEN

In the 1870s, sheepmen searching for unclaimed range land instead found cattlemen and their cattle. Ranchers threatened the sheepmen and their animals, setting "deadlines" the flocks could not cross. Unwilling to be "sheeped out," they killed sheep and sometimes herders as well. They poisoned flocks with salt-peter (not poisonous to cattle) and strychnine-laced grain. Cowboys rode through flocks, clubbing or shooting sheep to death. They tossed dynamite into flocks and set fire to penned sheep. They herded flocks over cliffs – "rimrocking" – or into quicksand. Confrontations continued into the 20th century.

## COUNTY SEAT WARS

Because of the prestige and profit that came when a town became the county seat, townspeople often did what they could to rig the ballots – including hiring gunmen to intimidate voters. Even after the ballot was held, some townspeople proved sore losers; when Rough and Ready failed to become the seat of Nevada County in 1850, it seceded from the Union, drove all federal employees out of town, and burned the post office.

Because a county seat was legally required to have a courthouse, rival townspeople would often invade the winning town and steal the courthouse records; in one case, raiders with jacks and rollers even tried to steal the courthouse! When Cimarron was voted the seat of Gray County in 1889, a businessman from nearby Ingalls hired Bill Tilghman, two Masterson brothers, and more than a dozen other gunfighters to steal the records. They had nearly finished when the alarm was raised and locals opened fire, killing four of the thieves and trapping the Mastersons inside.

Twenty-eight county seat wars were fought in Kansas, with more in Nebraska, North and South Dakota, and California.

## THE MOUNTIES

Founded in 1873, the Royal Canadian Mounted Police kept order in the Northwest Territories. The original 300 Mounties forced U.S. whiskey traders south of the border, then quelled Indian uprisings. Mounties protected settlers and Indians from each other and enforced the law. They gained a reputation for fair, peaceful dealings with Indians and were generally quite successful with them. In 1895, they kept the law in the Yukon gold fields.

Mounties wore scarlet dragoon jackets, gray riding breeches or blue trousers, and tall brown boots with attached spurs. For dress they wore a white cork helmet and tall black boots with attached spurs. Brown or black slouch hats were popular for everyday wear.

Until 1876, troopers carried .577 Snider-Enfield breech-loading carbines and .45 Adams revolvers (use the stats for Metal Cartridge Carbine and Colt .45 Army respectively). They then adopted the carbine version of the Winchester '76. The Mounties still exist, and still have a reputation for "always getting their man."



## THE FENCE CUTTER WAR

Barbed wire (available in 1874) brought the Texas Fence Cutter War in 1883. Large ranchers had bought and fenced much of the best pasture land, and smaller ranchers who still depended on open rangeland feared that the big concerns would put them out of business. The fences troubled settlers, too – some ranchers strung their fences across the public roads.

The settlers and small ranchers formed secret societies to remove the fences. They cut the fences by night, often burning the ranchers' fenceposts and grasslands as well. They sometimes left notes demanding gates and access to watering holes – they sometimes left coffins.

State legislation in 1884 made illegal fencing a misdemeanor and demanded gates every three miles of fence; fence cutters got one to five years and pasture burners two to five. Texas Rangers enforced the laws, arresting anyone caught carrying wirecutters.

See the *Lincoln County War* and *Johnson County War*, p. 108.



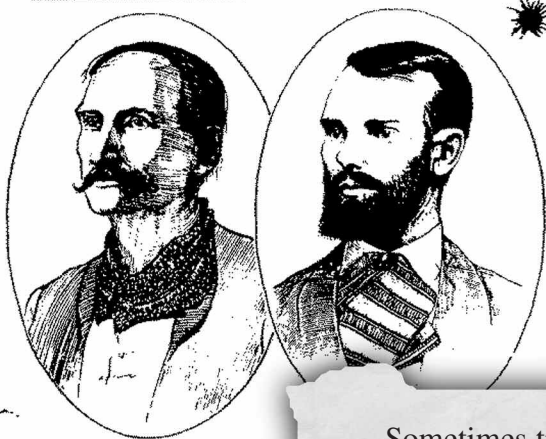
## CHAPTER 7

# LEGENDS OF THE OLD WEST

*"That thar may be true but I haint got no recollection of it."*

— Kit Carson

**\$25,000 REWARD**  
**JESSE JAMES**  
**DEAD OR ALIVE**



**\$15,000 REWARD FOR**

**\$5000 Reward for any Known**

**ST. LOUIS**

**WANTED** **BILLY  
THE  
KID**



**1000 REWARD**

Sometimes true, sometimes false, always larger-than-life, Western legends fascinate Westerners, Easterners, and the rest of the world. Western settlements offered everything from the wild lawlessness of the cowtown to the "urban unrest" of a growing metropolis. Ballads, dime novels, Wild West shows, and Hollywood movies took lawmen and outlaws, soldiers and soiled doves, and transformed some into noble heroes, others into despicable villains. And the most famous Western events tend to involve guns and blood . . .



## WILD BILL HICKOK

Teamster, stagecoach driver, hunter, guide, scout, spy, Indian fighter, sharpshooter, marshal, snappy dresser, womanizer, drunk, and (above all) story teller, James Butler Hickok was the ideal man of the American West. He wore his auburn hair long and dressed like a dandy. When on the trail, or performing with Buffalo Bill's Wild West, fancy furred and fringed buckskins did nicely. Visits to gambling halls called for a frock coat, silk vest, loud trousers, a pair of Navy Colts, a S & W Model 2, and a couple of derringers – plus a sawed-off shotgun if he was expecting trouble. He always wore at least two pistols, even while sleeping – a practice some disdained as too flashy.

Bill's marksmanship was legendary. Some said that he could hit a dime flipped into the air at 50 paces while racing his horse, or drive a cork into a bottle at 75 yards, and that he once killed two Indians with one bullet. Bill himself claimed to have killed 50 Confederates with 50 bullets during the Civil War and more than 100 men, not including Indians, "but never without good cause." While it's likely that none of these claims are actually *true*, Bill devoted much time to target practice and much attention to his guns, and was an accomplished shot with either hand. He was also fast on the draw, but counseled one man: "Whenever you get into a row, be sure and not shoot too quick. Take time. I've known many a feller slip up for shootin' in a hurry."

Bill's stint as marshal of Abilene in 1871 was pretty quiet. He permitted cowboys to wear their revolvers into town, and spent most of his time at the gaming tables, keeping order with his reputation rather than his trigger finger. His last known gunfight was with gambler Phil Coe; after killing Coe, Bill heard someone behind him, spun around and fatally shot his own deputy, who'd been coming to his aid. It wasn't the first time he'd shot a friend – his best known shoot-out had been with a boyhood chum named Dave Tutt – but it convinced Bill that his eyesight was failing. He left Abilene, did a stint with Buffalo Bill's Wild West, then drank and gambled his way around the west before arriving in Deadwood with Calamity Jane in 1876.

Bill was playing poker in a Deadwood saloon when Jack McCall shot him in the back of the head after a dispute over a 25-cent gambling debt. Hickok died clutching a pair of aces and a pair of eights, thereafter known as a "dead man's hand." McCall was acquitted by a miners' court after claiming that Hickok had killed his brother, but he was later arrested by a federal marshal and faced a real court, which established that McCall had had three sisters but no brothers. Asked why he'd shot Hickok in the back, McCall replied, "I didn't want to commit suicide." He was hanged, and buried with the rope around his neck.

## JOHN WESLEY HARDIN

One of the most murderous of the Old West's gunslingers, John Wesley Hardin killed at least 34 men, and his own count of 44 may well be true. In 1868, the 15-year-old Hardin shot a former slave in Texas, then the three soldiers who came to arrest him. He'd killed about 12 men by the time he came to Abilene as a cowboy. Hickok left him alone until Hardin shot a gambler in the next room for snoring, at which point the marshal came to arrest him. Hardin jumped out of the second-story window in his long johns, and later baled up three of Hickok's deputies, stole their trousers, and sent them back to town alive.

## HUGH GLASS, MAN IN THE WILDERNESS

In 1823, Hugh Glass was mauled by a grizzly bear and left to die. Andrew Henry, in charge of the expedition, asked for two volunteers to stay behind to give the man a decent burial. John Fitzgerald and Jim Bridger agreed. After a while, whether thinking Hugh dead or fleeing some danger themselves, the two men abandoned their companion, taking his rifle with them.

But Hugh survived. He dragged himself to a nearby spring, where he ate wild cherries and buffalo berries for more than a week. Then, with only a razor for a weapon, he staggered off toward Fort Kiowa on the Missouri River. At first, he could barely cover a mile in a day. Finding a pack of wolves with a freshly killed buffalo calf, he drove them off by setting fire to the grass and ate his fill. Finally, he reached Fort Kiowa, 200 miles away.

Learning that Andrew Henry was building a fort on the Big Horn River, Hugh headed for the Yellowstone in search of the men who abandoned him. There he found Jim Bridger, whom he forgave. Hugh finally caught up with John Fitzgerald at Fort Atkinson. Demanding his rifle, Hugh gave John a tongue-lashing. "Settle the matter with your own conscience and your God."

Ten years later, Hugh Glass died at the hands of Arikara Indians on the Yellowstone.

## BUFFALO BILL

William Frederick Cody became a freight firm messenger at the tender age of 11 and a Pony Express rider at 15. He won his nickname in the late '60s by feeding the Kansas Pacific construction crews, killing 69 buffalo in one day and nearly 4,300 buffalo in 18 months. As Custer's chief of scouts from 1868-1872, he tracked Cheyennes in Kansas and Nebraska for the 5th Cavalry. On a mission to rescue two messengers from the Cheyenne, he also took "the first scalp for Custer" from chief Yellow Hand on July 1, 1876.

Western author Ned Buntline spun a series of dime-novel tales romanticizing Bill's scouting days. Their popularity spurred Bill to write and act in a play about himself called "The Scouts of the Prairie." Encouraged by its success, he launched a "Wild West" show in 1883. It offered cowboys busting broncs, Indians (including Sitting Bull) attacking the Deadwood stage, a buffalo hunt with genuine buffaloes, a Pony Express ride, and feats of marksmanship – including Annie Oakley shooting cigarettes out of her husband's mouth. Bill brought the Wild West show across the United States – it played well and often in Madison Square Garden – as well as Europe.



## CALAMITY JANE

Born Martha Jane Canary, Calamity Jane moved from sedate Princeton, Missouri, to Virginia City, Montana, at the age of 13. In 1872, the 24-year-old Jane surfaced in Deadwood, South Dakota, wearing men's clothing and claiming that she'd been a Pony Express rider, stagecoach guard, mule-skinner, and a scout for Custer. After Hickok's death, she also claimed to have been the gunslinger's wife. Apart from her tall tales, she was famed for trying to live up to her motto, "Never go to bed sober, alone, or with a red cent left in your pocket."

Dime novels portrayed her and the fictitious Deadwood Dick battling desperadoes in the Black Hills, and she toured with Wild West shows during the '90s, frequently being fired for drunkenness. She was buried next to Hickok in Deadwood.

## BLACK JACK KETCHUM

The Ketchum gang shared the hideout of Hole in the Wall with the Wild Bunch, but while the Bunch was famed for planning, Black Jack Ketchum decided that no one would ever expect him to rob the same train in exactly the same spot time after time. The fourth time, Ketchum was caught by a posse and tried for train robbery and murder. A month later, his brother Sam robbed the same train in the same place yet again, and was shot by the conductor.

Black Jack Ketchum was hanged in 1901, but the hangman botched the job and Jack's head was torn from his shoulders. His last words, "Let 'er go," were widely misquoted as, "Let her rip!"

## ALFRED G. PACKER

In 1873, Alfred Packer guided five prospectors into the San Juan mountains; a few weeks later, he returned alone. Suspicion fell on him after he tried to cash a Wells, Fargo draft belonging to one of the prospectors, and an Indian commented that he was "too damn fat." When search parties discovered the bodies of the missing men stripped of flesh, Packer was charged with their murder. The judge, sentencing him to death, snarled, "Packer, you depraved Republican son of a bitch, there were only seven Democrats in Hinsdale County, and you ate five of them!"

Packer escaped hanging on a legal technicality: When Colorado became a state, death sentences passed under territorial law were voided. Republicans were prevented from placing a commemorative plaque on the Capitol or naming the cafeteria in the Department of Agriculture after him.

(Note: Packer's first name is often spelled Alfred, and there is evidence that he spelled it that way himself on numerous occasions.)

Hardin committed his last known murder on his 21st birthday, shooting a deputy sheriff. With a \$4,000 bounty on his head, he fled to Florida, but was arrested by Texas Rangers. He served 17 years of a 25-year sentence before being pardoned and, having studied law in jail, became a lawyer. A police constable in El Paso shot him in the back of the head in 1895, then claimed self-defense on the grounds that Hardin was facing a mirror. He was acquitted.

## JESSE JAMES

From 1866 to 1882, the James-Younger gang captivated the nation with their exploits. Southerners, particularly their fellow Missourians, thought of them as heroes – Robin Hood bandits who had been forced into crime when the railroad took their land, and who stole from wicked bankers and gave poor widows the money they needed to pay their mortgages (which the Jameses then reportedly stole back from the bankers). They also showed a certain bravado; at a fair in Kansas City, the gang robbed the box office of \$10,000 in front of 10,000 people who thought it was part of the show – until a little girl was shot.

Frank and Jesse James had ridden with Quantrill's Raiders and Bloody Bob Anderson's Confederate guerrillas, and taken part in massacres at Lawrence and Centralia, and so became heroes to defeated Rebels. They won even more sympathizers, including many northerners, after the Pinkertons laid siege to their mother's home and threw in a bomb that killed their nine-year-old half-brother and cost their mother her right arm.

In September, 1876, the eight-member gang tried to rob a bank in Northfield, Minnesota, expecting that their reputation would quell any resistance. When they shot a fleeing clerk, the townspeople armed themselves; two shot the gang's lookout and the gang fled, empty-handed. Townspeople who lacked guns threw rocks instead; another gang member was killed, and Bob and Cole Younger were badly injured. Frank and Jesse left them behind, and lay low for three years before Jesse formed a new gang.

Jesse pulled off a few more robberies and continued to evade capture, keeping his legend alive and pushing the bounty on his head up to \$10,000. His reputation as a tragic hero was complete when his cousin Robert Ford shot him in the back for the reward. Frank James surrendered his guns, and was tried and acquitted of murder and robbery charges in Missouri and Alabama. Ford went on a lecture tour protected by an armored shirt and a Gatling gun; he was gunned down in Alaska by a relative of the Youngers, who was pardoned two years later.





# THE WILD BUNCH

Despite their name, the Wild Bunch was a remarkably non-violent gang of bank and train robbers – thanks mostly to their charismatic leader, Butch Cassidy, who prided himself on never having killed anyone and usually managed to restrain the Bunch's more savage members, such as Kid Curry and the Sundance Kid. Other Bunchers included Elzy Lay, the McCarty brothers, and Matt Warner, who wallpapered a saloon with stolen bonds and bills that couldn't be cashed, including a \$10,000 note. Warner was arrested in 1896 for bank robbery, and persuaded the Bunch that rescuing him would be too risky; instead, Cassidy robbed a bank and spent the money on lawyers, and Warner was sentenced to five years. The Bunch then began robbing trains.

Rather than arrest Cassidy, the Union Pacific tried to buy him off by offering him a well-paid job as an express guard, but he robbed another train while negotiations were under way. The UP sent bounty hunters after the Bunch, and Butch and the Sundance Kid fled to South America.

According to the Pinkertons, Butch and Sundance were shot by Bolivian troops in 1911, but Cassidy's sister claimed that Cassidy escaped in a uniform stolen from a dead soldier, returned to the United States, fought in the Mexican Revolution as a mercenary, and died in 1937. Warner became a justice of the peace, then a deputy sheriff and part-time bootlegger, dying in 1938.

## KIT CARSON

In 1824, at the age of 15, Christopher Carson left Missouri on a trade caravan bound for Santa Fe. He was short at 5'4", but, as one admirer remarked, "cougar all the way." Kit became a trapper and roved the West for the next 15 years. During one Rendezvous, Kit made a name for himself by besting a loud Frenchman. Kit told the man to leave off pestering an Arapaho squaw, or he "would rip his guts." The man grabbed his rifle and his horse; Kit grabbed a horse and a pistol. With their horses nose to nose, Kit, being "prepared . . . allowed him to draw his gun," and they both fired at the same time. The man's rifle trimmed a lock of Kit's hair – Kit's ball splintered the man's hand. Kit later married the squaw.

In 1842 Kit made a friend in explorer Charles Fremont, who touted him as the "Hawkeye of the West." He led Fremont's three expeditions into the West from 1842 to 1846. The third expedition became embroiled in California's Bear Flag Revolt, and Kit became guide, fighter, and messenger against the Mexicans.

Near Modoc Lake, Kit singlehandedly drove off overwhelming numbers of Modocs who had surrounded Fremont's men. He circled the battle, picking off an Indian every few minutes, until the Indians fled, thinking themselves surrounded. He also carried military dispatches 3,000 miles to Washington in record time. He put his brief stays in Washington to good use, making influential friends.

In 1853, Carson bought a ranch and tried to settle down. His fairness and sympathy for the Indians' plight won him the job of Indian agent at Taos in March 1854. During the Civil War, he became a full-time Indian fighter, and helped break Navajo resistance. Kit established Fort Sumner to keep watch over the Indians at Bosque Redondo, then interceded with Washington to help the Navajo return to their own lands.

After the war, Kit was made brevet Brigadier General for "gallantry and distinguished services." He settled down in 1868 when he was named Superintendent of Indian Affairs for Colorado Territory.

## BELLE STARR

Belle Starr was known for her career in horse theft and rustling and her affairs with some of the West's famous badmen. She had a child by Cole Younger in the late 1860s, and in 1872 married desperado Jim Reed, who left her a widow two years later. Belle then turned her hand to a livery stable in Dallas, which she used as a cover for selling friends' rustled stock. In 1880, she married an Indian named Sam Starr and moved to Indian Territory, providing her companions with a handy hideout.

A \$10,000 reward was offered for Sam and Belle "dead or alive," but Hanging Judge Parker sentenced her to a mere six months. Despite this, she was immortalized as a "female Robin Hood and a Jesse James," and hired to portray a stagecoach robber in a Wild West show.

The "bandit queen" was widowed again in 1886, and took several more lovers before being shot from ambush in 1889.

## BLACK BART, THE PO-8

Black Bart – Charles E. Bolton – robbed 28 stagecoaches in California in 1877-83 with an unloaded shotgun and a "gang" made up of six "rifles" (actually painted broomsticks) protruding from bushes. He never robbed a passenger, and after each robbery, he'd leave a poem behind and escape on foot (he disliked horses). He was jailed in 1883, and released in 1888, promising to go straight. When asked if he would continue writing poetry, he replied, "Didn't you just hear me say I will commit no more crimes?"

## GENERAL GEORGE ARMSTRONG CUSTER

After graduating 36th out of his class of 36 at West Point, Second Lieutenant Custer threw himself eagerly into the Civil War. Nearly every charge of his Third Cavalry Division (including a particularly daring raid at Gettysburg) succeeded brilliantly. His military success coupled with his flamboyant attire and personality made him the darling of both General Sheridan and the country.

As a United States Volunteer, he rose rapidly in rank – Brigadier General at 23 and Major General at age 25. In 1866 Sheridan secured his appointment as Lieutenant Colonel of the 7th Cavalry, Regular Army. Custer was unwilling to bend to military requirements but led highly successful sorties against Arapahoe, Cheyenne, Comanche, Kiowa, and Sioux.

*Continued on next page . . .*



## GENERAL GEORGE ARMSTRONG CUSTER (CONTINUED)

In 1867, he was court-martialed and suspended for one year without pay for deserting his post to visit his wife. The next year he made a name for himself as an Indian fighter when he destroyed Black Kettle's Cheyenne village at the Washita. In 1873, Custer and the 7th protected railroad surveyors in Dakota territory. In 1874 Custer helped open the Black Hills – land sacred to the Sioux and Cheyenne – to gold miners. He then warred against Crazy Horse, Sitting Bull, and other chiefs who tried to drive the miners from the land.

On the morning of June 25, 1876, Custer took a brief look at a small part of a combined Sioux and Cheyenne encampment – which he didn't realize was actually several thousand warriors strong. Too impatient to wait for reinforcements, he split his command and attacked. Hopelessly outnumbered, his 260 soldiers died to a man. The sole survivor of Custer's command, a horse named Comanche, lived out his remaining years at Fort Lincoln, where he grazed in the flower beds and drank buckets of beer soldiers bought him on payday.

## THE COMSTOCK LODE

Former fur trapper Henry Comstock, also known as Old Pancake, discovered gold a mile up Mount Davidson, Nevada, in June 1859. Prospectors drawn to the site found that heavy blue sand interfered with their panning for gold flakes. One curious individual had the sand assayed – the ore, rich in silver, was worth \$4,700 a ton. During the next three decades, Comstock gold and silver fetched nearly \$400 million. Henry Comstock had sold his share of the claim for a paltry \$11,000. Eleven years later, he went insane and killed himself.

The Comstock Lode needed big business to make it work. The largest veins were unbelievably rich – several hundred feet thick – but more than half a mile into the mountain. An eight-mile complex of horizontal tunnels branched off the 3,000' vertical shafts blasted out of the mountain's bowels.

*Continued on next page . . .*

On his deathbed at Fort Lyon that same year, Kit demanded a large dinner and a pipe. Warned that this would kill him, he repeated, "No matter. Bring me some fust rate doin's, a buffler steak, my pipe, and a big bowl of coffee." Kit died satisfied after two pounds of meat and a pipeful of tobacco. He was given a general's funeral and buried in Taos.

## SAN FRANCISCO

Gold made San Francisco. In 1847, the village of Yerba Buena supported 459 souls – only one a miner. Two years later, the city of San Francisco boasted 25,000 inhabitants.

For 10 years, San Francisco was the hub of the earth. Every ship, wagon train, and stagecoach brought miners, merchants, traders, speculators, gamblers, and prostitutes. Americans, Europeans, Canadians, Chinese, Australians, Mexicans, South Americans, and more poured into the city as fast as they could get there.

The city consumed the multitude and spat out gold. \$345 million in gold dust was shipped east during the decade. Miners felt it bad luck to head back to the claim without spending every speck of gold dust. Inflation and expensive pleasures helped them achieve their goal. Eggs cost \$1 apiece, apples \$5, and any stevedore who hadn't high-tailed it to the diggings made \$30 a day. Some 550 bars, 46 gambling houses, and 48 brothels dotted the city. A miner could eat a fancy dinner, stroll a few doors down and bet \$20,000 on a card game, then finish the evening with a \$600 visit with an exotic foreign courtesan.

The city's unpaved streets became quagmires in spring rains – sleeping drunks drowned in the mud and mired horses had to be shot. People didn't bother to build anything more permanent than tents and hasty wooden buildings. Abandoned ships became hotels, churches, and even jails. Miners could hardly recognize landmarks from one trip in town to the next.

Six fires razed the ramshackle city. The first started on Christmas Eve, 1849, when a man stabbed by a bartender knocked over a lantern as he fell to the floor. The last big fire, in June 1851, destroyed \$25 million worth of property.

Crime flourished. The city's waterfront was nicknamed the Barbary Coast. Its prostitutes, gamblers, confidence men, and even its boarding house owners drugged, beat, robbed, and shanghaied their customers for decades. Chinese gangs called Tongs dealt in opium, gambling, prostitution, and slavery. The "Sydney Ducks" from Australia started fires to loot the city at their convenience.

The first Vigilante Committee, formed in 1851, hanged four of the Ducks and ran others out of town. A second Committee in 1856 cleaned up the town again.

Comstock Lode silver, which drained miners from California, transformed San Francisco into a banking, commercial, and cultural center in the 1860s.

## DODGE CITY

"All they raise around Dodge is cattle and hell." Founded in 1872 to serve nearby Fort Dodge and the buffalo hunters, the tiny Dodge City settlement boomed with the heyday of the cattle drives. In 1877, Dodge saw nearly 300,000 head of cattle, and 500,000 in 1882. The cattle shipped out on the Santa Fe railroad, or were driven along to Wyoming and Montana.



For 10 years, no other town could match Dodge City's reputation as a wild, lawless cowboy heaven. The city introduced the phrases "Red Light District," "Boot Hill," "stiff" (corpse), and "stinker" (buffalo hunter) to the English language. Most of its 700 permanent citizens were afraid to walk along Front Street after dark, but its dens of iniquity were a welcome oasis to dusty cowboys. The Dodge saloons never closed – owners threw away the keys on opening day. Drinking, gambling, sex, and the occasional shooting were the cowboy's chief amusements while in town.

Fifteen died in Dodge every year of its ten-year peak: Boot Hill received the unfortunate. Vigilance committees punished the worst offenses.

The Masterson brothers were the law in Dodge for a while. Ed was town marshal, and Bat was Ford County sheriff from 1878-1880. Wyatt Earp also joined the fun as marshal, though he and his brothers were better known as "the Fighting Pimps." Other visitors included Doc Holliday and his girlfriend "Big Nose" Kate Elder, Luke Short, Bill Tilghman, and Belle Star.

Kansas farmers finally made an end of Dodge. The fear of Texas Fever (p. 12), carried by longhorns, pushed the drives farther and farther west during the '70s and '80s. In 1885, the state legislature forbade cattle drives in Kansas entirely, and the cattle-based economy of Dodge sank slowly into decline.

## BODIE

The Badman from Bodie, who had to kill someone every day, was a myth used by mothers to frighten children, but Bodie, California, was real, and its body count wasn't much lower. After rich veins of gold were found there in 1870, the population boomed to 15,500, including 1,800 prostitutes in the sixty 24-hour brothels. Other industries included three breweries and 35 saloons. When one Sunday ended with no fatalities, locals enthused about the "Christian spirit" that had come to town.

Other bloody mining towns included Alta, Utah (see p. 110); Tin Cup, Colorado; Virginia City, Montana; Panamint City, California; Candelaria, Nevada; and, most famously, Tombstone, Arizona.

## GUNFIGHT AT THE O.K. CORRAL

The "facts" of this most celebrated of gunfights are fuzzy at best. Here's one possible reconstruction, in *GURPS* terms, of the combat.

Virgil Earp was the marshal of Tombstone, Wyatt Earp was his assistant marshal, and Morgan Earp was a part-time policeman. Wyatt's friend John "Doc" Holliday was a hot-tempered dentist and gambler. Ike and Billy Clanton and Tom and Frank McLaury were cowboys from local ranches who rode into town to whoop it up and sell their rustled cattle.

On the morning of October 26, 1881, the Earp faction argued with the cowboys and pistol-whipped two of them. Around 2 o'clock, Sheriff John Behan, fearing violence, stopped the Clantons and McLaurys on Fremont Street near the O.K. Corral. The Earps and Holliday appeared, approaching the group at a slow walk. The sheriff hustled up the street to stop them but they brushed past him.

The Earps stopped barely six feet away from the cowboys. Each had a pistol out (Doc also had a double-barreled shotgun concealed under his long coat). Billy and Frank had revolvers; Ike and Tom were unarmed. Frank was holding the reins of his horse, with a Winchester in a saddle scabbard.

## THE COMSTOCK LODGE (CONTINUED)

Technical difficulties plagued the mine. The usual timbering methods proved useless against the crumbly ore. The problem of getting enough air to the miners swinging their picks and using their hand drills (eventually replaced with the new power drill) in the deepest shafts led to a complicated ventilation system. The temperatures 2,300 feet into the mountain reached 120 degrees, and topped off at 150 degrees. Ice was lowered down the shafts to the crews – each worker was allotted 95 lbs. a day. The lowest shafts were always in danger of flooding, despite powerful pumps drawing off nearly a quarter-million gallons of scalding water a day. The Comstock killed an average of one worker a week.

## IN SEARCH OF GOLDEN CITIES

16th-century Spaniards heard tales of seven golden cities lying to the north of Mexico. The largest of these, Cibola, had streets paved with gold and four-story houses ornamented with precious gems. It was "a place of many people, streets and squares, and in some parts there were houses eleven stories high . . . the entrances and fronts of the principal buildings were of turquoises . . ."

Stirred by the stories of wealth and riches, Francisco Vasquez de Coronado set out with 300 mounted Spaniards, herds of pigs and sheep, and six swivel guns to find the fabulous cities. (He picked up 1,000 Indians along the way.) When at last he reached the land of the cities of gold, he found instead the pueblos of the Zuni Indians. Disappointed, he sent his lieutenants to search the surrounding region. Hernando de Alvarado returned from the Rio Grande with tales of the wealthy kingdom of Quivara.

Coronado was fascinated by a Plains Indian, nicknamed "The Turk," brought back by Alvarado. Following the tales he told, Coronado and his men marched through Texas to what would become Oklahoma and into Kansas. They reached Quivara, but The Turk's tales were somewhat exaggerated. Instead of gold and silver and jewels, they found the humble villages of the Wichita Indians. Disappointed, Coronado returned to Mexico. His expedition took two years and costs many lives – both Spanish and Indian. Despite his failure, tales of lost cities and Indian gold survived.



## LEGENDS OF THE WHITE STALLION

There was a Plains tradition of a magnificent white stallion; Some versions have placed him with a collection of sleek and beautiful mares; in others he is forever roaming, solitary and alone. He had a multitude of names, including the Deathless Pacing White Mustang, the Ghost Horse of the Plains, the Phantom White Stallion, White Lightning, and the Prairie King. The Kiowas said arrows and rifle balls could not touch the phantom mustang, and that he could run unscathed through a prairie fire. The Blackfeet believed he could breed warhorses that made the rider invulnerable in battle. White tales claimed he was too swift to be caught.

Other stories told of Black Devil – a murderous, fighting stallion that killed any man who dared throw a rope around him.

## JUDGE ROY BEAN, LAW WEST OF THE PECOS

A former Confederate guerrilla, Judge Roy Bean was appointed Justice of the Peace in 1882. His courthouse was the Jersey Lily, a saloon in Langtry, Texas. The judge opened proceedings with "Hear ye! Hear ye! This honorable court's now in session; and if any galoot wants a snort afore we start, let him step up to the bar and name his pizen." After the case was heard and the jurors – whoever was in the bar at the time – delivered the verdict, Bean passed sentence.

Rustler Carlos Robles, who spoke no English, received one of Roy's most florid deliveries: "Carlos Robles, you have been tried by twelve true and good men, not men of yore peers, but as high above you as heaven is of hell; and they've said you're guilty of rustlin' cattle. Time will pass and seasons will come and go; Spring with its wavin' green grass and heaps of sweet-smellin' flowers on every hill and in every dale. Then will come sultry Summer, with her shimmerin' heat-waves on the baked horizon; and Fall, with her yellin' harvest-moon and the hills growin' brown and golden under a sinkin' sun; and finally Winter, with its bitin', whinin' wind, and all the land will be mantled with snow. But you won't be here to see any of 'em, Carlos Robles, not by a dam' sight, because it's the order of this court that you be took to the nearest tree and hanged by the neck till you're dead, dead, dead, you olive-colored son-of-a-billy-goat!"

Bean once delivered a sentence of not guilty upon an Irishman accused of murdering a Chinese railroad worker. After thumbing through his only lawbook, the *1879 Revised Statutes of Texas*, Roy declared that he'd be "damned if I can find any law against killing a Chinaman."

*Continued on next page . . .*

Virgil shouted "Boys, throw up your hands. I want your guns." Three put their hands up, and Tom opened his coat to show he had no weapons, saying "I haven't got anything, boys, I am disarmed." Billy added, "Don't shoot me, I don't want to fight."

Turn 1: Doc walks up to Frank and sticks his pistol in Frank's stomach. Morgan shoots at Billy, hitting his right wrist.

Turn 2: Doc shoots Frank in the stomach. Morgan shoots Billy in the chest.

Turn 3: Billy falls back against a building clutching his chest wound. Frank is stunned.

Turn 4: Wyatt walks up to Ike. Tom moves toward Frank's horse. Frank is still stunned. Billy slides down the building's wall to the ground.

Turn 5: Frank, holding his belly wound, staggers into the street, leading his horse. Billy is stunned. Wyatt shoves his pistol into Ike's stomach, saying "Throw up your hands . . ."

Turn 6: ". . . you son of a bitch!" Ike grabs Wyatt's pistol with his left hand, Wyatt's shoulder with his right. Tom tries to grab the Winchester on Frank's horse, which shies. Frank staggers about with his horse, trying to draw his pistol. Billy steadies himself against the building.

Turn 7: Ike and Wyatt grapple. Tom tries to use Frank's horse as cover. Frank staggers about with his horse, trying to draw his pistol. Billy continues to prop himself up against the building. Doc puts his pistol in his pocket.

Turn 8: Ike and Wyatt grapple. Doc removes the shotgun from his overcoat. Frank draws his pistol. Billy draws his pistol with his left (off) hand.

Turn 9: Doc readies the shotgun. Frank readies his pistol. Billy readies his pistol. Wyatt says "Go to fighting . . ."

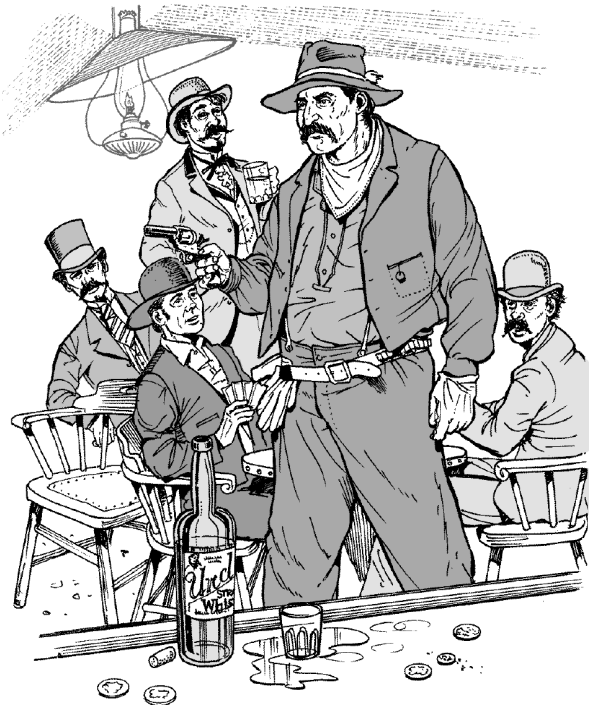
Turn 10: ". . . or get away!" Wyatt fires his pistol without hitting anyone. Ike runs away. Frank's horse bolts, exposing Tom. Frank aims. Billy braces his pistol against his knee.

Turn 11: Doc empties both barrels into Tom's chest. Frank fires and misses. Ike runs away. Billy, his pistol braced against his knee, aims.

Turn 12: Tom clutches at his chest wound and staggers away. Billy fires, plugging Virgil's thigh. Virgil falls to the ground. Ike runs away. Frank aims. Doc throws down the shotgun.

Turn 13: Tom staggers away. Virgil crouches. Ike runs out of range. Frank shoots and misses. Doc draws his pistol from his pocket.

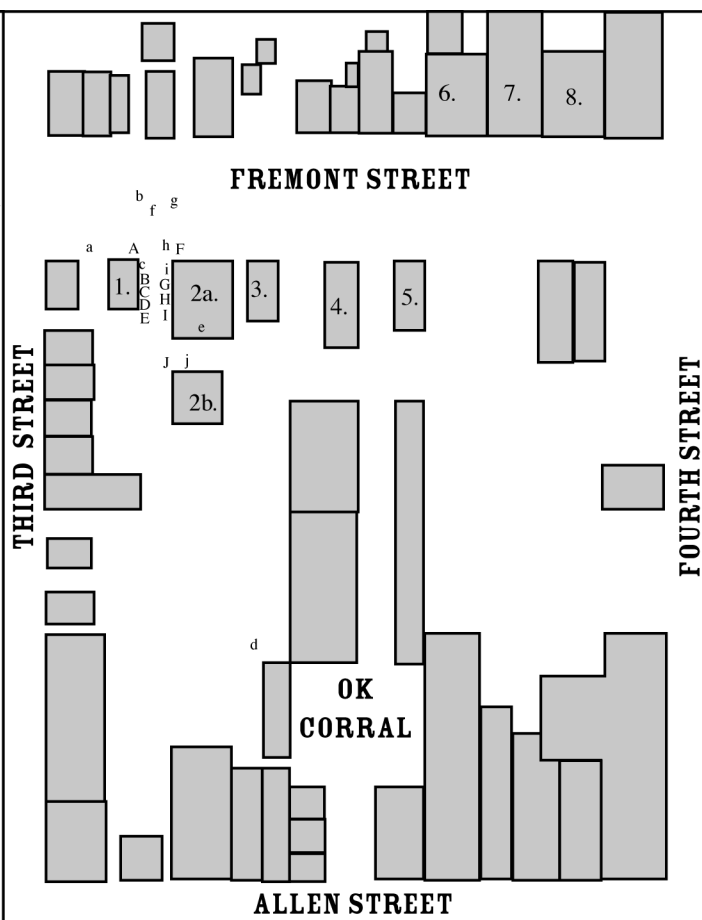
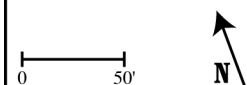
Turn 14: Tom falls to the ground, dead. Virgil stands. Frank aims, shouting "I've got you now!" Doc readies his pistol and aims.





**THE O.K. CORRAL  
TOMBSTONE  
OCTOBER 26, 1881**

1. Harwood House
  - 2a. Fly's Boarding House
  - 2b. Fly's Photographic Gallery and Studio
  3. Assay Office
  4. Bauer's Union Market
  5. Papago Cash Store
  6. Epitaph Office
  7. County Court
  8. Recorder's Office
  - A, a Tom McLaury
  - B, b Frank McLaury
  - C, c Billy Clanton
  - D, d Ike Clanton
  - E, e Billy Claibourne
  - F, f Doc Holliday
  - G, g Morgan Earp
  - H, h Wyatt Earp
  - I, i Virgil Earp
  - J, j Sheriff Behan
- (A: start of fight  
a: end of fight)



Turn 15: Frank shoots at Doc, and takes a neck wound from Morgan. Doc replies, "You're a good one if you have!" while he shoots at Frank, and takes a flesh wound in his hip. Morgan shoots at Frank. Billy steadies himself against the building.

Turn 16: Frank staggers away. Doc yells "I'm shot right through!" and Morgan exclaims "I got him!" Billy braces his pistol against his knee.

Turn 17: Frank falls to the ground. Billy aims his braced pistol.

Turn 18: Frank staggers away. Billy shoots Morgan in the shoulder and falls to the ground, crying "I'm hit!"

Turn 19: Frank falls, near death. Morgan crouches.

Turn 20: Morgan stands. Billy aims.

Turn 21: Morgan shoots at Billy. Wyatt shoots at Billy. Billy takes a shot in the stomach.

Turn 22: Billy slumps to the ground, mortally wounded.

Prone and dying, Billy tries to cock his gun. A bystander takes it away as Billy demands more cartridges.

By the end of the day, Frank, Tom, and Billy were dead. Virgil, Morgan, and Doc were wounded, but recovered. Ike and Wyatt escaped unharmed.

In December, an unknown gunman's bullet shattered Morgan's arm as he walked along the street in the dark of the night. In March of 1882, a Clanton supporter shot Morgan in the back as he chalked his cue at a Tombstone billiard parlor. Dying, a bullet in his spine, Morgan remarked to brother Wyatt, "This is the last game of pool I'll ever play."

## JUDGE ROY BEAN, LAW WEST OF THE PECOS (CONTINUED)

Called to investigate a man who fell from a nearby railroad bridge, Bean discovered \$40 and a six-shooter in the corpse's pocket. He judged that the man had been wrongfully carrying a concealed weapon and fined him \$40.

Bean's pet bear Bruno, chained in the yard, chugged bottles of beer and sobered up drunks before they came before the bench — a drunk chained next to him made a nice diversion.

## DICK MERRICK

"Pulling a Dick Merrick" was an Old West term for a miraculous escape. In 1864, Dick Merrick and Jebb Sharp were tried for robbery and murder in Jackson County, Missouri, and sentenced to hang the next morning. Fortunately for them, the hangman went to the wrong cell, and hanged two drunks hauled in the night before. The judge ruled that since the two robbers were still alive after the hanging, they had to be released. Merrick and Sharp quickly fled the county.

## YUMA PENITENTIARY

Yuma Penitentiary was built in Arizona Territory in 1876, and soon became the most feared and hated prison in the West. Prisoners exercised during the heat of the day, and were chained to stone floors during the cold desert nights. Guards were brutal and corrupt, and Gatling guns prevented escapes. John Behan was assistant warden there in 1887-1889; inmates included Phin Clanton and Buckskin Frank Leslie.

## BILLY THE KID

Few outlaws are so shrouded in myth as Billy the Kid, who claimed to have killed 21 men by his 21st birthday. The Kid's true tally was probably no more than six, possibly as low as four. To refute other myths, he was not left-handed, nor did he have two right hands, as shown in the *Police Gazette*.

Born Henry McCarty in New York City, the Kid moved with his mother to lawless New Mexico territory. His mother remarried, and Henry took the name of his stepfather, a silver miner named William Antrim. He was arrested in 1875 for stealing clothes from Chinese laundrymen, but escaped from prison and became a cowboy in Arizona. In 1877, the 17-year-old "Kid Antrim" shot and killed a blacksmith named Cahill after a brawl; arrested for murder, he again escaped from jail.

*Continued on next page . . .*



## BILLY THE KID (CONTINUED)

Calling himself William Bonney, he was hired by John Tunstall, who suspected that the Kid had been stealing his cattle. The Kid and Tunstall became friends, and when Tunstall was killed in the Lincoln County War (p. 108), Billy swore to avenge him.

After the war ended, the Kid was offered a pardon in exchange for testimony, but after giving himself up he escaped from jail again. He was eventually arrested by Lincoln County Sheriff Pat Garrett in Stinking Springs and sentenced to hang. He escaped by forcing his small hands through his cuffs, shot two deputies, and fled with his legs still in irons.

While visiting his friend Pete Maxwell near Fort Sumner, the Kid walked into a darkened room where Garrett was hiding. Silhouetted in the doorway, he asked, "¿Quien es?" – "who's that?" – and Garrett shot him, then ran out of the building shouting, "I killed the Kid!". Garrett's book *An Authentic Life of Billy the Kid* helped make the Kid a legend. Garrett himself was later shot in the back while answering a call of nature.

One legend states that the Kid had intended to go to Deadwood for a shootout with Wild Bill Hickok when he learned that Hickok was dead – and that Garrett's gun had previously belonged to Hickok. The gun said to be the Kid's own, a Colt Thunderer, was not manufactured until six years after his death.

## THE JOHNSON COUNTY WAR

During the 1880s, Wyoming settlers' small ranches and farms encroached on land the big ranchers had used since the end of the Civil War. The big ranchers wanted to keep the land; the settlers resented the big ranchers' entrenched wealth and power. Settlers branded the ranchers' calves and slaughtered their steers. The ranchers responded by hiring gunmen to patrol their pastures. Rustlers complicated the picture.

Vigilante ranchers lynched many suspected rustlers, but trouble continued. The ranchers finally hired 25 veteran gunmen, who were joined by the Wyoming Regulators vigilante group, to kill 70 suspects. The men botched the job, spending an entire day attempting to kill their first victims – two men holed up in a cabin. As they neared the town of Buffalo that night, they heard that the settlers were ready for them and retreated to a nearby ranch. The cavalry arrived just in time to prevent the settlers from blowing up the gunmen and vigilantes by ramming a wagon full of dynamite into the ranch house.

## HANGING JUDGE PARKER

In 1875, Isaac Parker became a Federal judge in the western district of Arkansas, including Indian Territory. In a 21-year career, he sentenced a record 172 people to death, 88 of whom were hanged. A suspect's chance of acquittal in Parker's court – popularly known as the Court of the Damned – was roughly one in six, and Parker insisted that there was only one penalty for murder. He had a scaffold built for 12, always watched the hangings, and always wept as he did so.

Being a deputy marshal for Parker was almost as hazardous as appearing before him; 65 died while on duty. Three of the survivors – Heck Thomas, Chris Madsen, and Bill Tilghman – became known as the Three Guardsmen, famed for their bravery and honesty.

## THE LINCOLN COUNTY WAR

The Lincoln County War began with Alexander McSween, a young lawyer. He was joined by John "Jinglebob" Chisum and John Tunstall in an attempt to break the Murphy-Dolan-Riley monopoly that owned the store, bank, hotel, saloon, freighting, and law in Lincoln town and county, New Mexico.

Skirmishes between the two factions began in 1875, when McSween refused to sell a dead client's 300 head of cattle to Murphy. In 1877, McSween, backed by money from Chisum and Tunstall, built a rival store in Lincoln, which he named Tunstall and Company. Murphy-Dolan-Riley tried to force the newcomers out of business before they could become real competition. Sheriff Brady's threats kept McSween's potential customers away.

The local magistrate slapped attachments on all McSween's property – including Tunstall's ranch. A posse of 30 men, including six "known outlaws," set out on February 18, 1878, to raid the ranch. Tunstall, tipped off the night before, headed into town accompanied by his hands (including Billy the Kid) to discuss the attachments. The posse gunned Tunstall down in the road, while his outnumbered men scattered.

Within a week, Tunstall's ranch hand Dick Brewer finagled arrest warrants for the outlaw posse members. Brewer and Tunstall's hands captured and killed two, but couldn't find the others. On April 1, Sheriff Brady and Deputy Hindman were shot from behind a wall as they walked down the street. The Kid and two other Tunstall hands were indicted. The killing brought the army into town, as well as Buckshot Roberts, who took part in the February 18 posse – he wanted the \$200 reward for the sheriff's killer. Roberts rode into Blazer's Mill, where Tunstall's hands were holed up. In the ensuing fight, Roberts and Dick Brewer killed one another.

McSween and a dozen men holed up in his townhouse and sniped back and forth with the Murphy-Dolan faction on July 15. Colonel Edward Dudley, a troop of 60, a Gatling gun, and a howitzer from nearby Fort Stanton arrived on the 19th. Dolan's new sheriff Peppin and his men joined the soldiers in the square.

Toward night, Peppin set fire to the house. About half the men inside, including the Kid, escaped, but McSween fell to five slugs as he ran out his front door. The McSween faction was broken, and the county slid slowly into lawfulness.



## CHAPTER 8

# CAMPAIGNING



The Old West offers challenges half a continent wide and a century long. A Western campaign may be “realistic,” with ordinary people in extraordinary circumstances. It may be “cinematic,” with the West and its heroes larger than life. It may be “weird,” livened up with strange creatures, ghosts, magic, shapechangers, martial artists, time travelers, steampunk technology, and even aliens. Or the GM may blend realism and fantasy in a campaign anchored in history but allowing epic heroes to rise to the front.

To create a campaign with cinematic elements in the blend, first choose the film or series you want to emulate, be it Sergio Leone’s “spaghetti westerns,” Clint Eastwood’s grim and gritty *Unforgiven*, Sam Peckinpah’s gory *The Wild Bunch*, or Mel Brooks’ *Blazing Saddles*. Will you allow cinematic advantages such as “Sharpshooter” or “Hard to Kill,”

or silly combat rules such as “Bulletproof Nudity” (very convenient for some Indian tribes) or “Infinite Ammunition”? Is morality black and white, or do brown characters trudge through a brown landscape? Are Indians and outlaws characters or cannon fodder? What types of magic work – if any?

Regardless of realism, there are two types of campaigns. A *picaresque* campaign offers constantly changing locations and conflicts – the *Wagon Train* television series and Huck Finn’s rafting adventures are good examples. Itinerant entertainers can form the basis for a picaresque campaign, with adventures at every stopover. An opera company or theater troupe may be the cover for a gang of thieves or smugglers. A traveling circus or freak show is a good excuse for characters with all sorts of unusual backgrounds and abilities to be adventuring in the Old West.



## TIMELESS WESTERN PLOTS

A “Hired Guns” campaign may be set in nearly any place or time in the Old West. Railroads, range wars, towns vying for the county seat, political factions battling over elections, and communities overrun by “bad men” all attract hired gunmen. Archetypical “Hired Guns” movies include *The Magnificent Seven* and *Unforgiven*.

A “Lawman vs. Outlaw” campaign also fits almost anywhere in the Old West. The PCs can work on either side of the law, or both at once, or, as vigilantes, outside it completely. As mean, tough outlaws, they can wear black hats; as fun-loving outlaws with a Robin Hood Code of Honor, they can be the darlings of the countryside. Films include *True Grit* and *High Noon* for lawmen, *Butch Cassidy and the Sundance Kid* for outlaws.

A “Settlers” or “Homesteading” campaign may be a desperate struggle to survive the first winter. The land often refuses to yield its treasures (whether crops or gold). Visitors to remote settlements will be rare, and not always trustworthy. In another settlement campaign, the PCs may found “the fastest-growing city in the West.” Troubles with the original survey, difficulties attracting settlers, and the unwanted attention of outlaws can keep the would-be town fathers busy.

An “Indian” campaign may take place before the coming of the white man. Tribal enemies and the hunt provide plenty of excitement. The Indian reverence for the land and its creatures, and a medicine man’s special understanding of the ways of the world, encourage mystical and magical adventures as well.

## THE ALAMO

The building called the Alamo originally formed part of the Mission San Antonio de Valero, founded in 1718. (It was called the Alamo Mission because it stood in a grove of cottonwood trees; *alamo* is the Spanish name for that tree). The mission was abandoned by the church in 1793; after that it was sometimes garrisoned by the Spanish, then Mexican armies. By the winter of 1836, it was mostly in ruins.

In February 1836, the old mission-turned-fort had a new garrison, a highly mixed force of about 180 fighters. They included members of the old Spanish-Mexican families, Anglos from the established colonies, recent emigrants from Europe and the United States, and adventurers looking for fighting and loot.

*Continued on next page . . .*

Episodic campaigns stay put – adventures come to the heroes. This doesn’t mean the PCs can’t leave – but they have a “home base.” Most Western television series are episodic – *Bonanza*, *The Big Valley*, *Gunsmoke*, and so on.

Single-shot adventures can be fun, too. They’re especially good for disparate character groups. A Soiled Dove, a Gambler, a Doc, a “drummer,” a Lawman, and an Outlaw probably wouldn’t stick together for long, but they worked fine in *Stagecoach*.

## BACKDROPS AND ADVENTURE SEEDS

Whether the adventure is a one-shot or a long-running campaign, the GM should choose a general setting – both in place and time. Historical events can provide adventure seeds – local wars, bank or train robberies, massacres, or natural disasters – but don’t be a slave to historical detail! In a purely cinematic campaign, of course, dates are arbitrary, anachronisms are to be expected, and history may be changed as the GM and PCs see fit.

## THE WEIRD, WEIRD WEST

Westerners are fond of tall tales, and having some of them be true might make for a more interesting campaign. GMs may choose to throw in the occasional encounter with the supernatural or with weird science – or to make it an ongoing theme, perhaps making the PCs investigators specializing in the occult and bizarre. For a thoroughly supernatural campaign, see *GURPS Deadlands*.

### *The Resurrection Man*

Alta, Utah, once sported a sign saying “WELCOME TO THE MEANEST LITTLE TOWN IN THE WEST.” It had 26 saloons and the largest cemetery for any town of its size, final resting place of more than 100 gunfighters. In 1873, a stranger dressed in black arrived and told the townspeople that he was able to resurrect all of the town’s dead. The miners gave him \$2,500 to leave town and never return . . . but what might have happened if they hadn’t? Alternatively, the resurrectionist might visit other towns.

For a *really* weird campaign, imagine what might have happened if the Ghost Dance had succeeded in raising the dead – and not just dead humans, but sabertooths, mammoth, dire wolves, or even dinosaurs!

### *Ghost Towns*

Ghost towns dotted the Old West, left behind when the gold or silver ran out, or the railroad didn’t go through, or some other disaster. In a Weird campaign, some of these may truly be home to ghosts – or to other undead, a la Stephen King’s *Salem’s Lot*. If the PCs blunder into an isolated town where all the mirrors have been smashed, it may be because the Cabal has chosen it as a refuge.

The most bizarre haunted house of the West is the Winchester mansion, built by the widow of the rifle manufacturer. To propitiate the ghosts of the victims of Winchester weapons, she continued adding rooms to the house until she died.



## ***Your Own Light-Hearted Friend***

Several writers have suggested that Jack the Ripper might have fled to the United States in 1888. The PCs might be deputized to keep control in a town after a “soiled dove” is found ritually slaughtered, and all strangers – especially those with accents – become suspects.

## ***Curses!***

After a run of near-fatal bad luck, a PC suspects he’s been cursed, and must discover by whom. Candidates may include Indian medicine men, former slaves initiated in voodoo, the fortune-teller in the circus that just passed through town – or almost anyone. If he isn’t paranoid now, he soon may be.

## ***Steampunk***

*The Wild, Wild West* and the animated series *The Lone Ranger* pitted their heroes against some Wellsian mad scientists with very strange devices. Dirigibles, steam-powered tanks, electric Gatlings, invisible men, Cavorite-powered spaceships, even clunky robots and mecha might be encountered when steampunk meets cowpunk. See ***GURPS Steampunk*** for much more on this.

## ***Other Times, Other Worlds***

Time tourists, collectors, Eternity’s Rangers on R&R, and the like might be frequent visitors to the Old West’s more picturesque locales, potentially causing all sorts of problems. Anachronisms such as Billy the Kid’s Colt Thunderer are only minor mysteries, but what if a robbery victim turns out to be wearing a monocryl vest and packing a Gauss needler disguised as an S&W Model 2?

Aliens might also decide to visit – or invade – the West. Howard Waldrop’s “Night of the Cooters” told the story of the unfortunate H.G. Wells Martians that landed in Texas, but what if the Greys had come to Roswell 80 years earlier?

## ***Broken Arrow***

A super-bomb test in Nevada creates a time-warp that sends bomb and test site back to the 1800s. The site includes a 1950s model town complete with mannequins, pigs, and TL7 military equipment, including small amounts of ammunition, fuel, and medicine. The PCs may be 1800s Westerners trying to prevent the weapons falling into the wrong hands, or Time Cops trying to retrieve it, or an uneasy alliance.

## ***The Wild, Wild Bestiary***

Apart from the legendary animals on pp. 118-121, PCs in a Weird, Weird West campaign may encounter lake monsters such as Champ and Ogopogo, Sasquatch or Bigfoot, mummies, giant snakes, the dragon-like Piasa, and a variety of shapeshifters. Paul Bunyan’s camp was infested by giant bugs, including enormous mosquitoes and fleas the size of kangaroos. Headless horsemen – the ghosts of those who lost their heads to bounty hunters – require a Fright Check at -4, but can be appeased by having whiskey poured down their throats.

***GURPS Bestiary*** gives stats for mythical western creatures including the Gumberoo, Hodag, Shagamaw, Snolligoster, Snow Wasset, Tripodero, Whirling Whimpus, and a variety of Giant Bugs and Loathsome Crawlers. More creatures suited to the Weird, Weird West may be found in ***GURPS Black Ops***, ***GURPS Atomic Horror***, ***GURPS CthulhuPunk***, and ***GURPS Voodoo***.

## **THE ALAMO (CONTINUED)**

Two defenders were already famous: Davy Crockett, congressman, soldier, raconteur, hero of popular literature, and Jim Bowie, duellist, speculator, entrepreneur.

They weren’t quite sure what they were fighting for (trial by jury? adult male suffrage? the right to own slaves? freedom of religion? the Mexican Constitution of 1824? an independent Republic of Texas? a new state for the United States?), but were certain who they were against – General Antonio Lopez de Santa Anna (1795-1876), latest ruler of Mexico.

Santa Anna was a notably vigorous adventurer and a major player in Mexican politics for half a century. He was an able soldier, with a fondness for fast marches and bloody massacres. In 1836, he was on the first of his five tries as ruler of Mexico.

Santa Anna, with an army of about 4,000, occupied the village of San Antonio de Bexar on February 23, 1836. He had marched fast, across the desolation of northern Mexico and southern Texas; long experience on both sides of revolts had taught him they were best squelched early. He had a tired army, but no slow-moving heavy artillery. He besieged the Alamo for 13 days (February 23-March 6) and finally carried it by head-on assault, a bloody way to deal with fortified defenders. The details of the battle are controversial; Mexican losses were heavy, perhaps as much as 25%, but Texas losses were total. (On March 20, the Mexicans captured another Texas force at Goliad; 371 surrendered on terms; all but 20 fast and lucky escapees were shot in disregard of those terms.)

Santa Anna pursued the major remaining force, commanded by Sam Houston. At San Jacinto, on April 21, Houston’s army turned, defeated Santa Anna’s column and captured him. The Texas battle cries were “Remember the Alamo!” and “Remember Goliad!” Houston dictated a peace that included an independent Texas. (Santa Anna had to get home before his rivals could take full advantage of his absence; there was a minimum of dickering.)

The legend of the Alamo was an important part of the intellectual equipment of most late-19th-century Americans (especially Texans). It affected their attitudes toward war in general, toward negotiation as an alternative to fighting (“Texans never lost a battle nor won a peace conference”), and toward Mexico and Mexicans. It was a heritage of valor, an exemplar of heroic conduct, and an excuse for any mistreatment of the late enemy.

It also spawned a set of counter-myths for the Mexicans. They range from perfectly credible (not all the defenders died fighting; some surrendered and were shot) to perfectly ridiculous (there were thousands of Yanqui soldiers at the Alamo, preparing to invade Mexico). It is still a contentious symbol for descendants of both sides.



## CAMPAIGN CROSSOVERS

GMs don't have to restrict themselves to "classic" Westerns. Most westerners believed in the supernatural, and would not be astonished to find themselves fighting ghosts, werewolves, or sorcerers. And other eras have their share of repentant gunfighters and gritty lawmen.

## MARTIAL ARTS IN THE OLD WEST

"Celestials" (Chinese) in San Francisco and other Western areas may know the martial arts. A few Chinese are members of tongs – the gangs that control the opium trade, gambling, prostitution, and slavery. More than 20 tongs flourished in San Francisco from the 1860s to the turn of the century. The *boo how doy*, or "hatchet men," were standing armies of fighting tong members named for their favored weapon. Tong wars involved assassinations, feuding, and sometimes open battle. Many Chinese drifted eastward from the Pacific Coast; some may have taken martial arts secrets with them.

A Shaolin priest may seem to have "superhuman" abilities. His unusual combat skills, mystical knowledge, and oriental ways set him apart. Boxing was popular in the Old West, and migrants from Europe may be trained in Savate, or French or Italian Fencing. The GM can also spice up an *Old West* campaign by shanghaiing the PCs from the Barbary Coast and sending them to Japan or China.

## WESTERN SPIES AND CONSPIRACIES

Spies served all sides in the territorial and Civil wars. Robber barons' employees spied on rival businesses, and many companies had their own army of detectives to track down criminals. Alan Pinkerton's agency and Wells, Fargo provided experienced men for many sorts of undercover operations. The Secret Service was established by Abraham Lincoln during his last cabinet meeting.

*The Wild, Wild West* TV show featured early Secret Service agents reporting directly to U.S. Grant. It's also a prime example of gadgets in the Old West.

Freemasons certainly existed in the Old West, as did banks, organized religion, and business conspiracies such as the ones behind the Lincoln and Johnson County wars. Organized crime existed in San Francisco's Tongs, and the Mafia was gaining power in New Orleans and New York. And there were many pivotal events that would have drawn the Time Meddlers, and may have been *caused* by the Discordians.

*Continued on next page . . .*

## MOUNTAIN MEN AND EXPLORERS

Most "official" exploration was done by groups of trained men. A few lone explorers tramped about, driven by the desire to explore the unknown.

The fur trade accommodates lone PCs or small groups. They may have a "home base," such as a fur company's fort, but they rarely stay there long. Goals are usually simple – the search for fame, riches, or a good route West. Company men may connive to make or keep their company Number One in the fur trade.

## *Negotiating With Indians*

The PCs have been sent out by their fur company to open relations with a powerful tribe in the Rockies. But an agent from a rival company arrived first, and has convinced the Indians that the PCs are evil men and not to be trusted. The rival agent intends to cheat the Indians – if the PCs can convince the Indians of this or of their own honesty, they may yet win the alliance.

## TERRITORIAL WARS

The first half of the century brimmed with wars. The War of 1812 heated up New Orleans and the Old Northwest (the Great Lakes Region). The Texas Revolution and the Mexican War involved Texans, Californians, and Americans.

The Texas Rangers (see sidebar, p. 93) saw lots of action. A group of Rangers may scout for Sam Houston during the Texas Revolution or spy for Zachary Taylor throughout the Mexican War. Or they may pursue Apache or Comanche raiders or battle Mexican incursions across the Republic's borders.

One campaign goal is simply "to win the war." But PCs may have other goals – such as getting rich from smuggling.

## *Remember the Alamo!*

Perhaps the Texicans could have held the Alamo, *if* reinforcements had arrived. Or *if* the old mission's walls hadn't been in ruins. Or *if* the Mexican Army had been just a little smaller. Or *if* supplies hadn't run out.

Playing "what if" with history can make an exciting one-shot adventure, especially with a battle as well-documented as this. The GM can easily find maps, time-tables, troop movements, and arsenals for the people involved (see sidebar, pp. 110-111). Changing just a few "facts" may turn a hopeless situation into something the PCs just might be able to pull off!

## WAGON TRAINS

Emigrants endured blazing heat, freezing cold, hunger, outlaws and Indians, river crossings, disease, accidents, natural disasters, and each other. Rest stops in towns or forts provide much-needed respites from endless travel.

The obvious campaign goal is "to get there." The goal of PC wagon masters and scouts may be "to get everyone there alive." And then the pioneers must struggle to wrest a living from the land . . .

## *A Rock and a Hard Place*

The wagon master has called a halt to the journey, while he and a half-breed Indian scout attempt to negotiate with an Indian band. The Indians offer to trade food for aid against their enemies – whose territory the train may have to cross.



## 'T WAS A MINER

A prospecting campaign may begin with the journey West (see *Wagon Trains*, above). Wild mining towns feature vigilantes, outlaws, and claim-jumpers. While the mine lasts, the boom town never sleeps. When the strike goes bust, the miners move on and the town dies.

Legends of lost Conquistador gold abounded in the Southwest, and prospectors seemed forever unable to relocate that rich strike they tried to hide from prying eyes. Almost any character type may be bitten by the “lost treasure” bug.

The obvious goal is to get rich.

### *Treasure Cave*

Rumors have it that the southwestern canyons hide a lost tribe of Anasazi (see sidebar, p. 62) with stores of gold. While in town, the PCs meet a cowboy who claims to have found the “Lost Canyon” while chasing a stray. While searching for the Indians and their gold, the party stumbles on a cave occupied by an outlaw gang (rustling cattle, stashing bank loot, or otherwise engaged in illegal activity). The gang doesn’t take kindly to strangers snooping about . . .

## CLASH OF CULTURES

An Indian vs. settler or army campaign may be run from either viewpoint. Attacks and counterattacks should be interrupted by attempts at diplomacy and peace.

The whites’ campaign goal may be to “tame the natives,” the Indians’ goal to “drive off the intruders.” A more challenging goal may be to bring peace to the West without sacrificing either of the clashing cultures – a difficult task indeed.

### *Kidnapped!*

A settler returns home from a hard day rounding up stray stock to find evidence of an Indian attack, and his wife and child gone. He may round up companions to help him search, call upon the Army, or strike off on his own. Finding his family can take days, months, or years. The original kidnappers sell the captives to other tribes, making it difficult to track them. Relations with the Indians involved will be strained. And perhaps the original evidence was faked, and a different tribe – or non-Indians – really did it.

### *Ambush!*

An army patrol (the PCs included) is attacked by a band of Indians. The patrol drive the braves off with only one fatality, and report back to the commander. Orders come down the line – find the ambushers and bring them to justice. The tribes in the area disavow all knowledge of the incident. After many false leads, runarounds, and misunderstandings, it turns out the ambushers were whites masquerading as Indians. A local gun trader hopes to start a war – and sell his wares to both sides.

## WORKIN’ ON THE RAILROAD

A railroad or telegraph campaign is good for PC scientists and engineers (surveying the route), merchants and businessmen (making money on the railroad and the towns along it), or line supervisors and laborers. Attacks from Indians, outlaws, and disgruntled settlers are all possible. The railroad “hells on wheels” let PC con men, gamblers, and prostitutes have fun too.

## CAMPAIGN CROSSOVERS (CONTINUED)

### URBAN COWBOYS

While the West may have been wild, eastern cities such as New York, New Orleans, and Chicago had areas that were as dangerous as any mining boomtown. Sending bounty hunters and deputy federal marshals into Hell’s Kitchen or Gallatin Street in search of their targets – with only concealed weapons, or none – would pose an interesting challenge. Cowboys and mountain men may find their lack of appropriate Savoir-Faire has comic (or violent) results. Lawmen may be appalled at the corruption, and soiled doves will be upset at the working conditions. Dudes and tenderfeet may be needed as guides. PCs visiting New Orleans may also fall foul of voodoo lodges; see *GURPS Voodoo* for ideas.

GMs shouldn’t overlook modern Western scenarios. “Old” plots may be updated – a 20th-century sheriff and his deputies must hold a drug lord safely in jail while hired thugs, irate local citizens, and the Mayor’s office all make it difficult. The revivalist con-man turns into a crooked televangelist; modern rustlers use airplanes and cattle trucks.



### TYRANNOSAURUS TEX

Whether discovered in a “lost world,” thawed from a glacier, hatched from eggs found by miners, created by a mad scientist, or revived by the Ghost Dance, extinct creatures can create a special challenge for explorers, settlers, cowboys, or soldiers in a Weird, Weird West campaign. President Jefferson, a student of nature who was interested in fossils, genuinely expected Lewis and Clark to discover extinct species during their expedition. Species well suited to this kind of adventure include the Cave Lion, Sabertooth (Smilodon), Dire Wolf, Mammoth, Mastodon, Teratornis, Diatryma, Ground Sloth, Brontothere, Quetzalcoatlus, Triceratops, Utahraptor, Deinonychus, and, of course, Tyrannosaurus rex. See *GURPS Dinosaurs* for more details.

*Continued on next page . . .*



## CAMPAIGN CROSSOVERS (CONTINUED)

### THE FINAL FRONTIER

Western plots and stereotypes can work well on other planets, particularly in a frontier setting where the law is rarely enforced and hostile aliens require everyone to go armed. *Star Trek* was sold to NBC as “Wagon Train to the Stars,” and Captain Kirk fought at the O.K. Corral in one episode (as did Doctor Who), and married into an Indian tribe in another. The movie *Outland* is *High Noon* set on Io; *Battle Beyond the Stars* is a space-opera remake of *The Magnificent Seven*, with George Peppard as Space Cowboy and Robert Vaughn reprising his role from the original.



### JOHN SHEPARD, TOWN MARSHAL

Mid 40s; tanned skin, dark brown hair, gray eyes, 5' 10", 155 lbs.

ST 12, DX 12, IQ 12, HT 11.

Basic Speed 5.75; Move 5.

**Advantages:** Alertness +1; Charisma +1; Combat Reflexes; Composed; Legal Enforcement Powers (Town Marshal, 5 points); Reputation (Fast Gun and Honest Lawman, +3 from law-abiding citizens and other lawmen).

**Disadvantages:** Duty (To townspeople); Enemies (Young hotbloods, above-average individuals, appear on a 6 or less); Honesty; One Arm; Reputation (Fast Gun, Too honest to bribe, -1 from outlaws).

**Quirks:** Coffee addict; Distrusts Irishmen and redheads (reacts at -1); Doesn't drink alcohol (horrible hangovers); Touchy about his surname.

**Skills:** Administration-11; Area Knowledge (many towns)-12; Brawling-13; Diplomacy-11; Fast-Draw-15 (LeMat pistol)-15; First Aid/TL5-11; Guns/TL5 (Pistol)-16, (Shotgun)-14, (Rifle)-12; Intimidation-12; Law-10; Leadership-14; Politics-13; Riding (Horse)-12.

**Weapons:** LeMat in Kansas Loop holster, S&W Model 2 in leather-lined pocket.

A former sergeant in the Union artillery, John acquired a reputation as a town tamer in mining towns, but tired of being called out by young gunslingers. He came to Lazarus while hunting for an outlaw four years ago, decided to stay, and was soon elected marshal.

The goal is usually to “get the line through.” Or GMs can let the PCs fight corruption and greed within the companies.

### Making Tracks

Two rival rail barons agree to build a line joining their railways, but bet a fortune on being the first to reach a town near the midpoint. The PCs work for one railroad, and must deal with hostile Indians and settlers who refuse to make room for the rails, but the biggest problems come from the rival company. The PCs can fight fair, or try to beat them at their own game – waylaying supply shipments, sabotaging machinery, creating trouble among the workers, etc.

## RIDING THE RANGE

The cowboy is an enduring symbol of the Old West. His duties offered constant hazards and challenges. Conflicts between cattlemen and sheepmen, or ranchers and homesteaders, encourage gunplay.

Campaign goals may be to preserve the boss's business, or to fight the cattle barons, or simply to have a good time earning a living – enjoying the rodeos, driving cattle, and hurraing the town.

### The Roundup

Neighboring ranchers often hold joint roundups with ample opportunities for rivalry. Each cowboy is eager to prove he's the best with a rope, a gun, or the branding iron – or that his horse is the fastest, smartest, or best on the ranch.

For the first few days of the roundup, everything goes smoothly – the cowboys gather and sort the stock, cut out the calves for branding, check the animals for injuries or disease, and spend the evenings gambling and boasting. Then someone realizes cattle are disappearing. One of the outfits at the roundup is rustling stock. They've been clever about it, however – every single outfit comes up short in its cattle count. The PCs must find the missing cattle and determine who the rustlers are.

### The Drive

Four or five ranchers have pooled their herds for a drive to market, and they're looking to hire. The applicants should be pitted against each other (and against NPC hands) in tryouts. Skills tested include Riding, Lasso, Heraldry (Brands), and Animal Handling. Of course, all the PCs hire on one way or another.

On the drive itself, the herd stampedes (see p. 122), steers stray, and dangerous rivers must be crossed. A band of Indians demands tolls for the use of their land. A gang of NPC cowboys beaten out by the PCs at the initial trials follow the drive halfway to market before making their move – they're cattle rustlers. And settlers in Kansas threaten to shoot the longhorns before they spread Texas Fever. They'll shoot the cowboys, too, if they don't move out in a hurry.

Once the cowboys get the cattle to market, there's the matter of finding a buyer. With a bad market, the trail boss may not be able to make the hands' payroll. With a good market, the cowboys may receive a hearty bonus – all the more money for them to lose to gamblers, con artists, and “soiled doves” as they shoot up the town.



## OUTLAWS

Campaigns involving outlaws lend themselves to roleplaying from either side of the law. There's room for any size gang, from the lone outlaw to a "Wild Bunch" with dozens of members.

The outlaws may be battling corruption, out for revenge, or perhaps they just want to get rich without working hard. Lawmen are out for justice, or at least the reward money.

### *Mistaken Identity*

The PCs are a small-time outlaw gang, specializing in petty thefts and bungled robberies – or simply drifters, holing up in an old barn while they look for a way to earn a living. They find themselves being blamed for every crime in the county. Wanted posters appear in the post office, with a larger bounty each week, and suddenly the county's crawling with bounty hunters, all after them. Then, someone gets murdered and the blame falls on the gang. The only way to keep the rope off their necks is to find out who did it and bring proof to an honest lawman. The local sheriff is certain he's solved the crime and resents the accusation that he's got the wrong men.

### *The Great Train Robbery*

The PCs board a train. Quite a crowd has gathered at the station, as the train is carrying something unusual – an enormous quantity of gold, an aristocratic European diplomat, or prisoners bound for trial. During the trip, a gang of outlaws on horseback attempt to steal the gold, kidnap the diplomat, or free their comrades. The outlaws may also have allies already on the train.

## SHOOTIN' UP THE TOWN

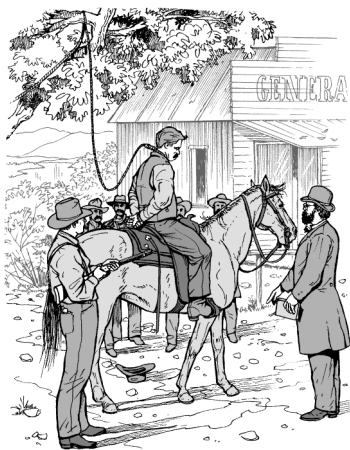
Western towns provide endless opportunities for trouble, whether the PCs are residents or just passing through. A campaign can use a town as more than just a background; it may be a living setting. The PCs can be leading citizens, intent on keeping their town a nice place to live . . . or the local low-lives.

### *The Circus Comes to Town*

A small circus hits town, and someone lets the animals loose after the first show. The circus offers a large reward for animals brought in uninjured, and for the person responsible – not necessarily uninjured, but alive. The PCs may be impoverished cowboys hoping to lasso the critters before nervous townspeople shoot them, or lawmen trying to restore order and solve the crime. Suspicion may even fall on one or more of the PCs.

### *Shootin' Contest*

A drummer for an arms manufacturer is sponsoring a sharpshooting competition. The entry fee is \$1; first prize is a custom-made revolver. The contest attracts every hopeful gunslinger from miles around. Rivalries are intense, and when a young woman wins, narrowly beating a PC, older gunslingers start muttering that the contest was fixed and talk about lynching her, the drummer, and the PC.



## BULL TYLER, RANCH HAND

Late 20s; dark brown skin, short dark brown hair (scalped), brown eyes, 6', 180 lbs.  
ST 15, DX 10, IQ 10, HT 12.

Basic Speed 5.5; Move 5.

**Advantages:** Fit; High Pain Threshold; Rapid Healing; Semi-Literate.

**Disadvantages:** Appearance (Unattractive); Cowboy's Code of Honor; Nightmares; Scalped; Social Stigma (Black).

**Quirk:** Rarely removes hat, even for ladies; Likes theater, especially Shakespeare; Wants to settle in an all-black town; Sleeps with his rifle.

**Skills:** Animal Handling-12; Armory (Guns)-10; Axe/Mace-12; Axe Throwing-11; Boxing-12; Brawling-10; Butcher-10; Gunner/TL5 (Cannon)-11; Guns/TL5 (Rifle)-13, (Shotgun)-11, (Pistol)-11; Heraldry (Brands)-10, (Indian)-8, (Military)-9; Languages (Comanche)-8, (Spanish)-8; Lasso-11; Naturalist-9; Riding (Horse)-11; Singing-11; Survival (Plains)-12; Teamster-12; Traps-12; Whip-11.

**Weapons:** Colt Army in flap holster; Tomahawk; Bullwhip; Lasso; Springfield Trapdoor .50-70.

Bull Tyler served a term with the 10th Cavalry, then joined his brother Hoss hunting buffalo for a winter. He survived a scalping by bounty hunters, killing one with his tomahawk and the other with his rifle, but was unable to save his brother. He's been working at the Walking T ever since, saving his money for a property of his own.

## EDWARD "RED" CULLEN, OUTLAW

Early 20s; sunburned complexion, strawberry blond hair, blue eyes, 5'9", 130 lbs.

ST 12, DX 12, IQ 11, HT 13.

Basic Speed 6.25; Move 6.

**Advantages:** Alertness +1; Combat Reflexes.

**Disadvantages:** Bad Temper; Compulsive Spending (Mild, -5); Enemies (Outlaws' enemies; unknown, medium-sized group, appears quite rarely, -12 points); Impulsiveness; Reputation (-4 from law-abiding people).

**Quirks:** Obnoxious drunk; Lapsed Catholic; Dislikes Englishmen.

**Skills:** Acting-10; Animal Handling-11; Brawling-13; Carousing-11; Escape-10; Fanning-13; Fast-Draw (Remington .44-40)-13; Fast-Talk-12; Forgery (Brands)-14; Gambling-13; Guns/TL5 (Pistol)-16, (Shotgun)-13, (Rifle)-12; Heraldry (Brands)-10; Holdout-11; Intimidation-13; Knife-11; Lasso-11; Leadership-11; Riding (Horse)-13; Stealth-11; Streetwise-12; Tactics-11.

**Weapons:** Remington .44-40 in Kansas Loop holster; Colt Model 1878, 10g.

*Continued on next page . . .*



## EDWARD "RED" CULLEN, OUTLAW (CONTINUED)

As teenagers, the Cullen brothers joined a successful gang of rustlers and horse thieves, but after seeing the gang's ringleader lynched, they decided to try a less dangerous line of work – robbing stagecoaches. They soon graduated to train robbery, but met with more resistance than expected; two of the outlaws were killed, and Red shot a guard and a passenger before being wounded. He's recently escaped from jail, and is hiding at the Walking T.

## JADE SONG, "SOILED DOVE"

Late teens; pale golden skin, long black hair, brown eyes; 5', 90 lbs.

ST 9, DX 12, IQ 11, HT 12.

Basic Speed 6; Move 6.

**Advantages:** Appearance (Beautiful); Reputation (+3 to clients); Voice.

**Disadvantages:** Addiction (Opium, -5 points); Illiterate (Except in Mandarin); Secret (-10 points); Social Stigma (Chinese); Reputation (Soiled Dove, -2 to upstanding citizens, -4 from their wives).

**Quirks:** Tends to hide face behind fan and speak softly; Distrusts gamblers.

**Skills:** Dancing-11; Diplomacy-11; Holdout-10; Language (Mandarin)-12, (English)-10; Savoir-Faire-13; Sex Appeal-16; Singing-13; Sleight of Hand-12; Streetwise-10.

Jade Song is hiding from her family (living in San Francisco), and is Guthry Fullwright's most valued "horizontal singer." If the GM chooses, she may have some low-level martial arts skill – something like An Ch'i, Chin Na, or Wing Chun would be appropriate.

## SOUNDTRACKS

Music from your favorite Westerns adds to the atmosphere when roleplaying in the Old West. The soundtrack from *The Good, the Bad, and the Ugly* is available on compact disc. Ennio Morricone, the composer, wrote themes for other Westerns, too.

"Sounds of Nature," available on cassette or compact disc, is a collection of sound effects, including weather (wind, rain, and thunder) and animals (crickets). Better yet, "Sounds of the Fascinating Animal World" has moos, barks, baas, rattling rattlesnakes, and stampeding cattle!

New World Records produces compact discs with authentic Indian chants and songs. Titles include "Powwow Songs: Music of the Plains Indians," "Oku Shar-eh: Turtle Dance Songs of the San Juan Pueblo," and "Navajo Songs from Canyon de Chelly." (For more information or a catalog, write to New World Records, 701 Seventh Avenue, New York, New York 10036.)

# DESIGNING WESTERN ADVENTURES

All good fiction, including roleplaying adventures, involves conflict at the core of the story. "Formula" Westerns encompass nine basic story cores – the cavalry and Indians, the lawman, the outlaw, the railroad, the ranch, the range war, revenge, the rustler, and the repentant gunfighter – but there are many variations within these basic plots. The GM may challenge the PCs with Nature (stampedes, floods, or the harsh environment), Man (bandits, Indians, U.S. soldiers, or crooked business barons), or Time (overcoming natural or man-made obstacles to attain a goal before it's Too Late). And good roleplaying always involves PCs struggling with themselves – will honor overcome greed? Can understanding replace hatred?

## Setting a Task

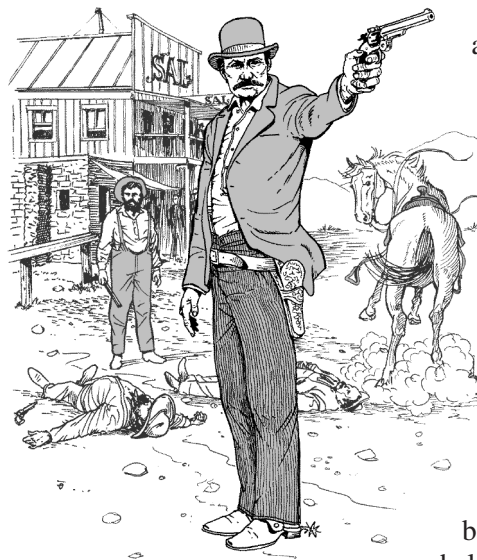
Most adventures revolve around the PCs' attempts to perform a task. This may be as straightforward as reaching a destination or searching for treasure, or the GM may hide the true task behind a request for aid or an opportunity to "raise hell" in town.

While a campaign should have an ultimate goal, adventures may have more immediate tasks. A prospector's goal is to find gold, but he must first survive the trek to the gold fields and defend his claim. Cowboys strive to get their cattle to market, but on the way the GM can challenge them with rustlers, stampedes, or just plain bad luck.

## Action

Much of the action in Old West adventures takes the form of gunfights, knife fights, fistfights, and other combat. The GM may spice this up by involving moving horses, highballing trains, swashbuckling (even cowboys can swing from chandeliers), and treacherous terrain.

Most action-oriented events involve many DX-based skill rolls – the GM should keep the action moving and not let the game bog down in dice rolling. Setting time limits (someone cries "The bridge is out!" while the heroes battle it out with the bad guys on the roof of the train) will help prevent incessant combat.



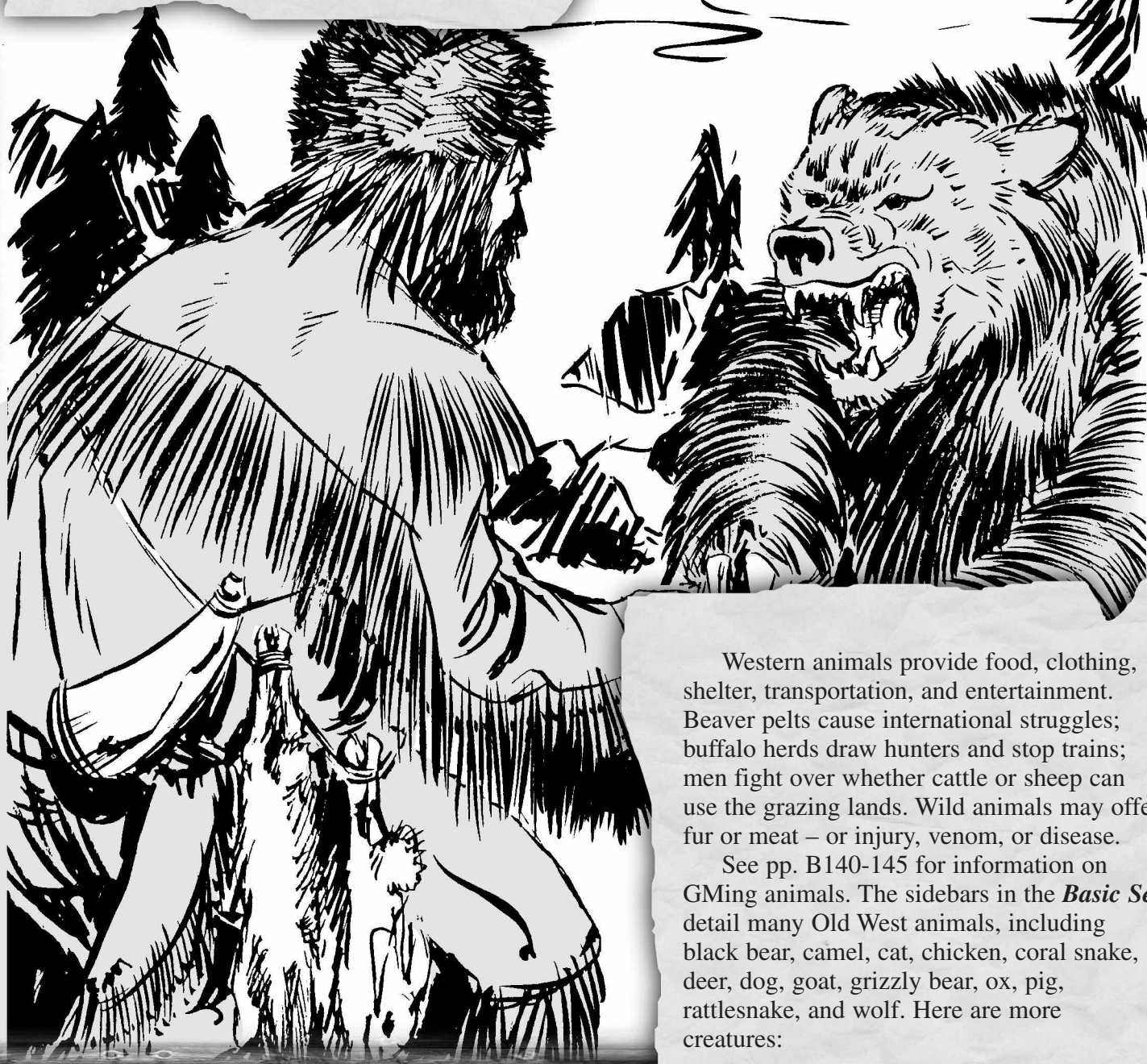
## Outcome

The final challenge should be worthy of the trials and tribulations the heroes have endured. If players expect a standard Hollywood showdown or shootout, the GM should let them have it. Unexpected twists may include a three-way showdown, enemies on every rooftop, or a traitor in the comrades' midst. These variations allow standard scenarios to be used over and over again – a simple, basic plot, with occasional surprises to keep the audience interested.





## CHAPTER 9 CRITTERS



Western animals provide food, clothing, shelter, transportation, and entertainment. Beaver pelts cause international struggles; buffalo herds draw hunters and stop trains; men fight over whether cattle or sheep can use the grazing lands. Wild animals may offer fur or meat – or injury, venom, or disease.

See pp. B140-145 for information on GMing animals. The sidebars in the *Basic Set* detail many Old West animals, including black bear, camel, cat, chicken, coral snake, deer, dog, goat, grizzly bear, ox, pig, rattlesnake, and wolf. Here are more creatures:



<i>Creature</i>	<i>ST</i>	<i>DX</i>	<i>IQ</i>	<i>HT</i>	<i>Mv/Dodge</i>	<i>PD/DR</i>	<i>Damage</i>	<i>Reach</i>	<i>Size</i>	<i>Cost</i>	<i>Notes</i>
<i>Domesticated Animals</i>											
Burro	25	10	4	13	8/6	0/0	1d-1 cr	C	2	\$30	
Cattle	60	9	4	16	8/4	1/1	1d+1 imp	C	3	varies	See p. 9
Horse, Cavalry	40	9	4	15	16/8	0/0	1d+2 cr	C,1	3	\$100	
Horse, Draft	60	9	4	16	12/6	0/0	1d+2 cr	C,1	3	\$60	
Horse, Saddle	35	9	4	14	12/6	0/0	1d cr	C,1	3	\$60	
Mule	40	10	4	14	12/6	0/0	1d cr	C,1	3	\$90	
Pony	30	10	4	13	13/6	0/0	1d-1 cr	C,1	2	\$50	
Sheep	12	13	4	15/7	8/6	2/1	1d-3 cr	C	1	\$5	
<i>Desert Animals</i>											
Gila Monster	2/13	13	3	13/3	1/6	2/1	1d-5 cut	C		\$0	F
Roadrunner	5	12	5	13/5	8/10	0/0	1d-4 cut	C		\$0	air speed 4
Scorpion	1	13	1	15/1	1/6	0/0	venom	C		\$0	C
Vulture	3	13	4	13/4	8/4	0/0	1d-3 cut	C		\$0	
<i>Forest Animals</i>											
Armadillo	3	9	3	14/4	3/4	2/1	—	—		\$.30	
Beaver	5	13	4	14/7	6/6	1/1	1d cut	C		\$2	
Lynx	5	15	4	14/8	10/7	0/0	1d-3 cut	C	1	\$1	
Porcupine	3	10	3	13/4	2/5	3/2	*	C			Damage by quills
Raccoon	4	14	6	14/7	6/7	1/1	1d-4 cut	C		\$.50	
Skunk	4	14	4	12/4	3/5	0/0	spray	R,C			
Wolverine	11	12	5	11	8/6	1/2	1d-2 cut	C	1	\$1	
<i>Legendary Animals</i>											
Delgeth	36	13	4	18	18/10	2/2	2d cut	C	4		
Jackalope	2	14	3	15/3	14/7	0/0	1d-5 imp	C			
Nashlah	110	11	4	14/70	3/0	3/7	5d cut	C, 1	20		
Weewilmekq	24	8	2	15/20	3/4#	1/1	*	C, 1	11		
<i>Mountain Animals</i>											
Eagle	5	12	4	13/5	18/9	0/0	1d cut	C		\$12/\$1	
Puma	15	14	5	15/16	10/7	1/1	1d cut	C	2	\$2	
<i>Plains Animals</i>											
Buffalo	59	10	4	15/23	13/6	1/2	1 imp	C	4	\$5	
Coyote	5	14	6	14/9	9/7	1/1	1d-3 cut	C	1	\$.75	
Jackrabbit	4	14	4	14/6	12/8	0/0	—	—		\$.05	d
Leech			—	15/1	0/0	0/0	*	C		\$0	d

## KEY TO THE BESTIARY

**HT:** When there are two HT numbers, the first is the animal's health and the second is the animal's hit points.

**Move/Dodge:** Except for encumbered animals, Speed is equal to Move. Dodge is an animal's only defense.

**Damage:** This is the creature's most common attack.

**Reach (Rch):**

C = animals that can only fight in close combat.

1 = animals that can fight at one hex.

R = ranged attack (skunks, etc.).

**Cost:** For domesticated animals, this is the average cost for a healthy individual. For wild animals, it is the value of the animal's pelt, hide, and/or meat. When there are two costs, the first is for a live animal and the second is for its pelt, meat, or bounty.

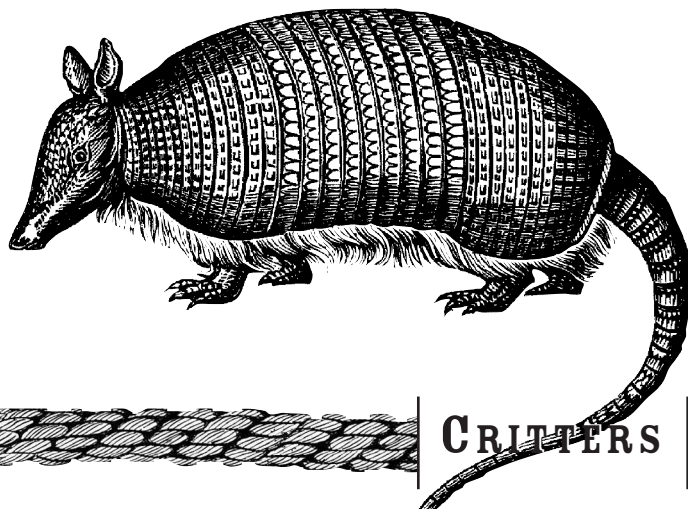
**Notes:** C – Type C venom: see p. CII147.

F – Type F venom: see p. CII148.

d – carries disease contagious to humans.

### Armadillo

Found in southern Texas, the armadillo is a burrower that eats insects and roots. Their burrows can be a threat to hoofed animals. Their undersides have no protective armor and, contrary to rumor, they can't roll into a ball. Armadillos are now known to carry leprosy – but it is unclear whether they carried it in the 1800s, or if it is a modern-day wrinkle.





## Bear

Bears were extremely common in the West in pioneer days; one explorer saw more than 220 in a single day in Colorado in 1824, and seeing 50-60 a day within 20 miles of San Francisco was not unusual. Their numbers were greatly reduced by hunting; mountain men killed them with guns and knives, vaqueros lassoed them, and one Californio aristocrat enjoyed fencing with them. A skin fetched \$2-\$20; butchers also bought the meat, and Chinese apothecaries bought the gall bladders. Bears are second only to snakes in the number of folk-tales told about them. See p. B141.

## Beaver

The beaver is clumsy on land but agile in the water, to which it retreats if frightened. Beavers slap their tails on the water to sound an alarm. The beaver never attacks, but if cornered, its chisel-sharp teeth may give a potentially crippling bite. A prepared pelt weighs 2 lbs.

## Buffalo

Buffalo have shaggy fur, short horns, and a humped back; they stand five to six feet tall at the shoulder and weigh up to 3,000 lbs. They are most active in the morning and evening, feeding mainly on grass. Small herds may have a dozen animals – large herds number 200 to 300. These herds typically graze within sight of one another. When stampeding or migrating, they combine into a single herd with as many as a million animals. Most herds migrate 200 to 500 miles each season.

Buffalo are easily spooked – sudden noise may stampede a herd, which sometimes runs for miles before slowing; see *Stampedes*, p. 122. An angry buffalo may charge, trampling for 1d+2 crushing or goring with the horns for 1d impaling (bulls) or 1d crushing (cows).

It usually takes three shots to kill a buffalo. Shooting the leader first may create a *stand* – the leaderless buffalo simply mill about, easy targets for buffalo hunters. When shot in the lungs, an animal takes a few steps and falls. Hits elsewhere make it run, causing a stampede.

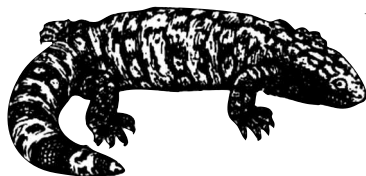
Plains Indians believe that white buffalo are sacred.

## Burro

Burros (also called donkeys or asses) carry the mail to Santa Fe, work for lonely prospectors, and haul loads of brush in the Southwest. They are patient animals, and very sure-footed (DX 15 for any roll to keep their footing). They can eat desert vegetation that would kill a horse. Donkeys are generally mild-mannered, but can bite for 2 points of crushing damage, and kick to the back hexes only for 1d-1. Despite their small size, they can carry loads up to 300 lbs.

## Camel

Camels were imported into Texas as beasts of burden for the 2nd Cavalry in 1856, sent to California, and used as pack animals on wagon trains to Colorado. See p. B141.



## Cattle

Stats for oxen are listed on p. B144. Most oxen in the Old West are castrated males, although some teamsters use cows or bulls as draft animals. A typical price for a yoke of oxen (two animals) is \$150.

Texas longhorns are mean and ugly. Easterners and Europeans scoff at these skinny creatures. Their horns spread at least 4 to 5 feet; a 9-foot spread is quite possible. At four years old they are considered full grown and weigh 800 to 900 lbs. Old steers may weigh 1,500 lbs. or more, and have wrinkled horns (cowboys call them “mossy horns”). Their cattle ticks may spread Texas fever (p. 12) north on a drive. Typical prices in Texas are \$3-\$8 a head – they are worth as much as \$30 a head at the end of a drive.

When bulls charge, treat the attack as a slam plus a trample. The slam does 1d+1 impaling (bulls with short horns do only 1d crushing; longhorns do 1d+2 impaling). The bull tramples for 1d+1 crushing, halved for running through the hex. It turns and gores the victim, then tosses the remains; treat this as falling from 5 yards (p. B114).

## Coyote

The tawny coyote is smaller and slightly more intelligent than the average wolf. It hunts singly or in pairs and is nocturnal, but may raid in the day. Farmers view coyotes as a threat to livestock, and kill them mercilessly. The coyote really prefers small game, such as rabbits and rodents. Coyotes are known for their wariness. It is difficult to trap a coyote; it has an effective IQ of 13 for any Contest of Skills with a trapper, and learns very quickly.

## Delgeth

The fearsome subject of Indian legends, this giant carnivorous antelope considers humans a delicacy and attacks them on sight. It rams for 2d+2 crushing damage (a slam attack, the victim taking damage if hit). It then tramples the victim for 1d+1 crushing or bites for 2d cutting.

## Eagle

Eagles are large birds of prey. The largest have wingspans over six feet wide, and can carry up to 10 lbs. in their talons. Most are cowards – crows can scare them away! – but some are very brave. Eagles are diurnal and mate for life – no more than two are ever encountered at one time. They have nothing to do with humans unless raised in captivity, and do not attack unless severely wounded. They attack with their claws for 1d cutting damage. They can swoop at 60 to 70 mph (Speed 30-35). On the ground, Speed = 1, Dodge = 6.

## Gila Monster

The gila monster is a poisonous lizard about two feet long, pink and yellow with black shadings. It is solitary and nocturnal and fasts for days, then eats all it can – eggs, rodents, reptiles, and birds.



The gila monster can't run and stands fast when threatened. It bites and holds in close combat, sometimes chewing. The bite does 1d-5 cutting damage, and it injects type F venom causing intense pain and doing 1d+1 damage. If the lizard is removed within four seconds, the poison's effect is avoided, but it will probably bite again before it can be gotten rid of. Use a Contest of ST – the gila monster's jaws have ST 14. Pouring something nasty (kerosene, corn whiskey) into its mouth makes it let go, as does burning its lower jaw.

## Horse

Horses have an inherent Danger Sense at IQ+6.

Most horses in the Old West are *saddle horses* – they do double-duty in harness and under saddle as the work at hand demands. A cavalry horse is a bit bigger, stronger, and faster than an ordinary saddle horse. A few settlers have Conestoga horses or other large draft animals.

Many Western horses are mustangs – feral horses descended from Spanish stock. Standing less than 58" at the shoulder, they qualify as ponies. They're quite strong, able to carry loads which seem too big. Mustangs make excellent cowponies.

Horses can bite in close combat for 2 hits crushing damage. They kick into any front or rear hex for crushing damage: ponies 1d-2, race and saddle horses 1d, cavalry and draft horses 1d+2. Trampling damage is 1d for ponies, 1d+1 for all others; see p. B144. For information on mounted combat, see pp. 83 and B135-137.

## Jackalope

These hares with antlers are diurnal and range in groups. Males charge anything – even buffalo, who merely get out of their way – to impress females. A buck will charge (Slam) a party of humans on sight. If the victim loses or ties a Contest of DX, he takes 1d-5 impaling damage. After charging, the buck trots off in search of a female. If attacked, a jackalope is surprised (mental stun, two turns) and charges. Killing a jackalope serves little purpose – some consider it bad luck – as the meat is inedible. Cowboys have a great time trying to convince dudes that jackalopes are real.

## Jackrabbit

Named for its long ears, when the jack(ass) hare sees a predator, it fluffs up, trying to look larger than it really is. It may also do a "jackrabbit" start from standstill, jumping more than twice its height. Rabbits can devastate acres of crops in an evening. Humans may catch "rabbit fever" (see p. CII171) by skinning or eating an infected animal.

## Leech

Leeches are parasites found in swamps, lakes, and sluggish streams. People may pick up 2d leeches per 5 minutes spent in a swamp (fewer in cool climates); after picking up a dozen or more leeches, the victim will begin to lose 1 HT each 5 minutes. Leeches will become bloated and drop off after 15 minutes of feeding, but if even 1 HT is lost to leeches, a roll against HT+2 is needed to avoid infection.

## Lynx

Lynxes are solitary hunters, though occasionally two will work together to bring down a deer. They will only attack large animals if rabbits and squirrels are scarce – there are no recorded attacks on humans and they deliberately avoid them (Stealth-18), though they will occasionally raid barnyards. They fight viciously if attacked or cornered, going for vulnerable areas such as eyes or throat. They climb and swim well, jump up to 10 feet, and can spot mice at 250 feet and hares at 1,000. The American lynx is also known as the bobcat; the Canadian lynx has bigger feet, which help it walk on snow.

## Mule

Mules are the sterile offspring of a donkey and a horse. They make excellent draft and pack animals, although they refuse to overwork themselves. Mules are less high-strung than horses, and less prone to shying at sudden noises.

Mules can kick into any front or back hex, doing 1d crushing damage. They can also bite in close combat, doing 2 hits of crushing damage.

## Nashlah

The nashlah lives in the Columbia River, and is known to Indians there. It's large enough to swallow a canoe whole! It is never described fully, but is said to have long hair that hangs down from its waist, so it is apparently not a fish or reptile. The GM may describe it as a giant otter or bear with long fur. It is active at any time, and eats as many people as it can. It will attack any boat, swimmers, or people on the shore.

The nashlah is very tough – the legendary hero who slew it broke five weapons on its hide. However, fire affects it as if its DR were only 1. It bites for 5d cutting damage – its teeth are small but numerous.

## Porcupine

Porcupines are slow-moving, but most can climb and swim. They are nocturnal, solitary, and eat leaves and bark.

They will never attack, but when threatened turn their backs and strike with their tails. The lightly attached quills come off easily when touched. Each quill has thousands of small barbs that slowly drive it deeper and deeper into flesh, penetrating about 1/8 inch each day.

Anyone in the porcupine's hex must make a DX roll to avoid taking quills. Touching the porcupine requires DX-2. Rough grabs automatically mean quills. The quills do no real damage going in, but each does 1 HT damage as it is removed, plus an additional 1 HT per hour it's left in. If a victim gets quills in his hand, he may not use it until he has removed the quills – which may do enough damage to cripple the hand. Any dog may also get into mischief with a porcupine.

## Puma

Also called cougar, catamount, mountain lion, and panther, the puma can't roar, but has a loud purr. It can cover 6 yards at a bound, and can leap four yards up into a tree (the usual method of "climbing"). They can drop 60 feet and spring off at top speed.





Solitary and nocturnal, they swim well, but dislike water more than four inches deep. Pumas stalk as close as possible to their prey, then spring for the neck, attacking with either a paw or a bite. Most victims die of broken necks.

Pumas are very shy and avoid people, but fight if wounded.

## Raccoon

Solitary and nocturnal, raccoons climb and swim well. They are primarily carnivorous, although they eat fruits, nuts, and berries, as well as farmers' poultry and corn.

They are a match for most predators, and have been known to lure hunting dogs into water, then drown them (raccoons are at DX-2 in water). If provoked, a raccoon grapples and bites in close combat for 1d-4 cutting damage.

## Roadrunner

The roadrunner is a small, brown, ugly bird that's poor eating and bears no resemblance to the cartoon character. It likes to run ahead of horse-drawn vehicles and is easily tamed, but always mischievous. It can dodge a rattlesnake strike, peck the snake to death, and swallow it head first.

## Scorpion

Scorpions, ranging in size from 1/2 to 7 inches, are nocturnal and feed mainly on insects and spiders. They prefer to retreat rather than fight and don't sting men unless disturbed. Some scorpions inject a Type E venom doing 1 point of damage; others a neurotoxin (Type C) with damage ranging from 1 point to 2d+1.

## Sheep

Sheep are shy and wary of humans. They are almost totally defenseless, but rams are aggressive, and may charge (Slam) if provoked: +3 ST for determining knockdown and 1d-3 crushing in a head butt. A flock (usually 1,000 to 2,500 sheep) grazes with the protection of a shepherd and his dog. A shorn sheep yields about 2 lbs. of wool.

## Skunk

Skunks are solitary nocturnal animals, and eat small animals, as well as poultry and eggs. They have no fear of humans and are easily tamed, but cannot be trained to spray on command.

Threatened skunks spray. Their arc of fire is 60 degrees and range is four yards; anyone within that area gets it. The victim may be sprayed in the eyes: The skunk's DX roll is at -5 for the head, -10 for the eyes. The victim's only defenses are Dodge and Block. If the skunk misses its DX roll, the victim is still sprayed, but not in the eyes.

Spray in the eyes brings blindness and intense pain for five minutes. Anyone sprayed will stink for four weeks. Reaction rolls are at -3 during those weeks, and no Stealth closer than 10 yards. Skunks can also bite for 1d-4 crushing damage.

## Snake, venomous

Stats for Rattlesnake and Coral Snake are on p. B143. Other snakes common in the Old West include:

Copperhead (Forest); Type A, 1d-1; aggressive.

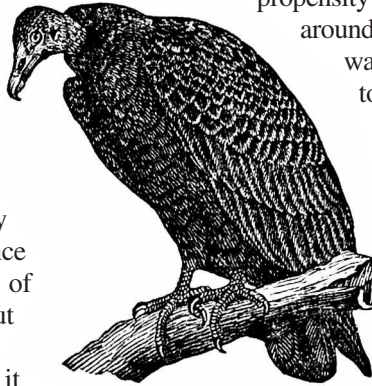
Cottonmouth (Swamp, Fresh water), Moccasin (Desert);

Type A, 1d+1; aggressive.

Sidewinder (Desert); Type A, 1d; aggressive.

## Vulture

This carrion-eater, also called a buzzard, has a bald, brightly colored head and neck, flapping wattles, broad wings, and a propensity to hop clumsily along the ground. It flies in circles around its dead or dying prey, which may be a convenient way to find a missing companion. Its beak is too weak to seriously damage anything but rotting flesh.



## Weewilmekq

There are several Indian myths about giant leeches; Weewilmekq, the size of a large constrictor snake, is one of the biggest. Like an ordinary leech, it lives in water, and attacks with a sucker that contains teeth. It attacks by entwining its prey – treat as a grapple – and sliding its sucker over its victim's body, searching for a place where DR is 2 or lower. This takes one turn more than the victim's PD (e.g. it will take 1 second to attach to an unarmored victim); shields do not count. If it locates a likely spot, Weewilmekq bites; its sucker does only 2 points of damage, but it then draws blood from its prey, doing 1 HT every 2 seconds.

A successful Contest of ST is needed to break Weewilmekq's grapple, or to pull the sucker off the wound, which does an additional point of damage.

## Wolf

Wolves usually hunt in packs of 4 to 40 animals. They rarely attack humans unless other prey is very scarce, but ranchers considered them a threat to stock; bounties of \$1 or \$2 were common, and pelts fetched an extra \$1-\$2. See p. B144.

## Wolverine

A wolverine resembles a cross between a weasel and a bear. It is strong enough to drive pumas and bears from their kills and can bring down a moose hampered by deep snow. It is active for four hours, then rests for four hours, through day and night.

Wolverines harass trappers. They raid trap lines, eat the trapped animals, and ruin the traps. If hunted, they may double back and destroy the hunter's camp. If cornered, they bite for 1d-2 cutting damage.

## Other Sources

The *GURPS Bestiary* includes many other animals suitable to *Old West* campaigns. Legendary creatures native to North America (Gullet Snake, Piasa, Rolling Rock, Unktehi, and others) can be found in *GURPS Fantasy Bestiary*.





When a herd of 20 or more large animals stampedes, everything in the way is treated to a “knockdown and overrun” slam attack (see pp. B142 and B112). This is not a deliberate attack by the herd – the panicking animals simply ignore minor obstacles in their path. Buffalo, cattle, and horses are all prone to stampeding.

A stampede moves at the normal Move of the animals involved, modified by -1 for each 100 animals in the herd (minimum Move 3). The dominant animal leads the stampede away from the source of fright in as straight a path as the terrain allows.

Stampeding animals form a solid mass extending in a shallow V behind the leader. The number of animals determines the size of the stampede (assume 2 hexes per animal). Terrain often determines the width of a stampede – box canyons and city streets force stampeding animals into long, narrow masses. Otherwise, the GM may use the following estimates.

Number of animals	Width (Hexes)	Length (Hexes)
20	4	10
50	5	20
100	8	25
250	10	50
500	10	100
1,000	16	125
5,000	40	250
10,000	50	400

Herds of more than 10,000 animals may stampede in a path 100 hexes wide; 100,000 animals may stampede in a path 200 hexes wide. A great buffalo herd (up to a million) will stampede in a path 450 hexes wide (about 1/4 mile), and migrate in a path spreading a mile or two.

## Damage and Defense

The best thing to do about a stampede is get out of the way. The size and Move of the stampede, the distance at which the danger is realized, and the Move score of the target all affect the chance of survival. Barring accidents, the GM may assume that anyone mounted on a good horse can outrun or avoid a stampede.

If there’s too little time to get out of the way, the next best hope is to climb a tree or hide behind a solid obstacle. If there’s no obstacle handy, shoot the leader and a few more animals, and hide behind the bulwark of dead meat. Unfortunately, while horses tend to go around or over solid obstacles, cattle and buffalo are as likely to go *through*. Stampeding buffalo have been known to knock railway cars off the tracks.

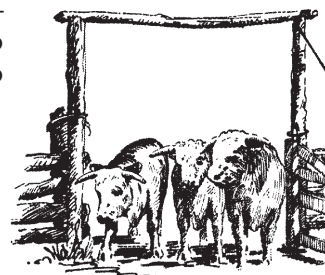
The GM assigns DR and Hit Points to the protecting object (see p. B125). For each turn the obstacle is overrun by the stampede, the GM rolls a Dodge for the herd (4 for cattle, 6 for buffalo and most horses). Very large or solid obstacles, such as wagons or boulders, modify the Dodge by +1 to +10. A successful dodge indicates the herd splits around the obstacle, doing no damage that turn. (When a herd splits, future rolls for

the herd’s Dodge are at +4 until the gap is closed by a failed Dodge.) A failed Dodge does crushing damage to the obstacle (1d+1 for cattle; 1d+2 for buffalo). The stampeding herd may also knock aside or overturn any movable obstacles. The GM may assign a ST to the obstacle and roll a Quick Contest of ST between obstacle and herd each turn. A herd’s effective ST is the normal ST of the stampeding animal multiplied by half of the herd’s effective Move. (A buffalo stampede with Move 8 has an effective ST of 236 –  $59 \times 4$ .)

**Overrunning:** If no cover can be found, chances of survival are slim. Unless the herd splits, the victim will be slammed or trampled by at least one animal each turn. The only defense is a Dodge. On a successful Dodge, he avoids being slammed and may attempt an Acrobatic maneuver (see below). Failure results in knockdown and trampling. (If the target is mounted, but could not escape for some reason, treat as a normal slam attack – the GM rolls a Quick Contest of ST between the mount and the stampeding animal to see if anyone falls down. See pp. B112-113.) If the victim is already prone, Dodge is at -2 – no Acrobatic maneuvers are possible.

**Damage per Turn:** The amount of damage taken by *each* person overrun by a stampede is equal to the normal trampling damage of the animal (1d+1 for horses and cattle; 1d+2 for buffalo). In a herd trampling, this damage is *not* halved for running through the hex – multiple tramples within the same turn more than make up for the short length of time each animal spends in the hex.

**Acrobatic Maneuvers:** Someone threatened by a stampede may attempt an acrobatic maneuver when first overrun, and once each turn he remains standing. The player determines the exact nature of the maneuver attempted, but the general idea is to get on *top* of the stampede. Equestrian Acrobatics skill rolls are at -4 for cattle or buffalo. As long as the stampede continues, the animals will be too busy running to attempt to dislodge any riders. Once the herd slows down, however, staying on will require some impressive Riding rolls.



## Turning a Stampede

It’s not possible to disperse a stampede. However, the herd may be turned by frightening the lead animal into a change of direction – gunfire, shouting, and waving arms or floppy hats may all work. An attempt to turn a herd requires a general reaction roll. A reaction of Good or better turns the herd to the desired heading. Poor and Neutral reactions result in no changes. A reaction of Bad or worse means the lead animal changes direction directly toward the one attempting to frighten it!

Multiple attempts to turn a stampede may eventually compact it into a milling mass of confused animals.





# GLOSSARY

- Arbuckle:** coffee; a greenhorn.
- Beeves:** cattle over four years of age (plural of beef).
- Biscuit shooter:** the cook on a ranch or trail drive; also called the "old lady," "doughbelly," or "beanmaster."
- Boot Hill:** temporary cemetery above Dodge City, where cowboys and gunfighters who died with their boots on were buried with their boots as a pillow; later, any frontier cemetery.
- Brasada:** Texas brush country, covered with thickets.
- Bronco:** Wild or half-tamed horse.
- Buffaloing:** the "gentle art of bending a revolver barrel around a law-breaker's skull."
- Bullwhacker:** someone who drives an ox team.
- Calico:** cowboy term for a woman, or visiting or courting a woman.
- Californio:** a Spanish Californian.
- Carpethaggers:** Northerners who reconstructed the South: named after their luggage.
- Celestial:** any member of the Chinese race, or anything having to do with China, the "Celestial Empire."
- Cimarrones:** wild longhorns.
- Color:** visible sign of gold or gold dust. "Finding color" is a cue for wild excitement.
- Coolie:** anyone who will work for "kuli" wages, from the term for Continental Indian peasants.
- Cordilleras:** the entire chain of mountain ranges parallel to the Pacific coast, including the Rocky Mountains and the Sierra Nevadas.
- Cornfield meet:** a head-on railroad collision.
- Coup ("koo"):** an act of bravery recognized as being worthy of honor by fellow tribesmen. (From the French meaning "blow" or "stroke.")
- Coup stick:** a ceremonial stick, lance, or club, used to touch the enemy in an act of bravery.
- Cowboy:** pre-Civil War, a cattle thief; later, a hired ranch hand.
- Cowgirl:** first used in 1901 to describe female rodeo riders; later, female ranch hands.
- Cowpoke:** originally a railroad employee in charge of penned cattle waiting shipment by train; later used for cowboys.
- "Dead Man's Hand":** aces and eights, the cards Wild Bill Hickok held when shot in the back.
- Dodgers:** wanted posters.
- Drag:** the tail end of a column of cattle, made up of the habitual stragglers. "Riding drag" was bringing up the rear.
- Drover:** someone who drives cattle or sheep.
- Dry gulch:** ambush.
- Dude:** a non-westerner who takes pride in his clothing.
- Exoduster:** black homesteader.
- Fandango:** a dance, or an entertainment involving dancing.
- Grangers:** embattled farmers; members of the Patrons of Husbandry, or the Grange, founded in 1867.
- Greenhorn:** an inexperienced person; also called a "tenderfoot" or "arbuckle."
- Hell on Wheels:** tent cities of gamblers, whores, and thieves that followed the laying of railroad tracks.
- Hogan:** A Navajo dwelling made of a log and stick frame covered with mud, sod, or adobe.
- Honda:** the slip knot, bowline, or eye through which a rope passes to make a loop.
- "Hurrahing the town":** riding along the main street firing into the air.
- Lariat:** Texan term for the rope used in lassoing.
- Lasso:** Californian term for the rope used in lassoing.
- Leathernecks:** Union soldiers wearing regulation protective leather collars.
- Leatherstockings:** buckskin-clad adventurers in Texas.
- "Luke McGlue":** fictitious thief blamed for all the unsolved robberies (usually from greenhorns) in Dodge City.
- Mavericks:** unbranded cattle.
- Mesteños:** "mustangs," strayed or wild cattle and horses.
- Mossy horns:** longhorn old-timers. At age 4 or 5, wrinkles appear at the base of the horns, increasing with each year.
- Muleskinner:** someone who drives a mule team.
- Mustang:** wild horse.
- Nester:** homesteader.
- Outfit:** the things you carry around with you; or a set of people and the things they carry around. For example, an army outfit is a troop and all its gear; a trapping outfit is an expedition and all its gear.
- Parfleche:** a buffalo skin bag or pouch usually containing pemmican.
- Pemmican:** Indian "trail mix," cakes of powdered dried meat mixed with fat, dried fruits, and berries.
- Placer ("plasser"):** the deposit of gold on gravel banks, sand bars, and the stream bed, from the Spanish for an underwater plain.
- "Playing both ends against the middle":** using cards subtly trimmed to be concave or convex.
- Plus ("plews"):** beaver skins.
- Point rider:** a cowboy who rides in front, directing the herd, on a cattle drive.
- Prairie oysters:** fried bull's testicles.
- Pueblo:** from the Spanish word for "village." Refers to certain Indians of the Southwest and the apartment-like adobe structures they live in.
- "Pulling a Dick Merrick":** a miraculous escape.
- Ramrod:** the lead cowboy on a cattle drive.
- Rank:** usually applied to horses: mean-spirited and untrainable.
- Reatas:** Spanish for ropes. Lariat is a corruption of *la reata*.
- Red Light District:** area with several brothels.
- Remuda:** saddle horses used on a trail drive; horses owned by a particular cowboy; or an improvised rope corral.
- Rimrocking:** herding sheep over a cliff for the purpose of discouraging sheepmen.
- "Road Agent Spin":** surrendering a pistol butt first, then spinning it back into firing position.
- Rodeo:** Mexican term for roundup, not used to denote a show or contest until late in the century.
- Roosters:** term for roustabouts on steamships.
- Roustabouts:** rough-and-tumble laborers.
- Running iron:** any piece of iron that can be heated in a fire and used to "write" a brand onto an animal. Carrying one around in the days of stamp irons is a grave social error.
- Rust-eaters:** men who laid railway tracks.
- Scalawags:** Southerners who opposed secession and supported Reconstruction.
- Segundo:** second in command on a cattle drive (from the Spanish meaning "second").
- Shebang:** the general store.
- Shootist:** a gunfighter. Term coined by Clay Allison.
- Shoulder straps:** slang term for officers in the Civil War and frontier Army days, similar to today's term "the brass."
- Slick-ears:** cattle without earmarks. See also "mavericks."
- Snapper:** bronc buster.
- Sodbusters:** settlers of the prairies who build sod houses.
- Son-of-a-bitch stew:** stew of veal and offal, a speciality of "biscuit shooters."
- Squaw man:** white man married to or living with an Indian woman.
- Stamp iron:** a branding iron with the brand shaped on the end by a blacksmith.
- Stiff:** corpse.
- Stinker:** buffalo hunter.
- Swing rider:** a cowboy who keeps the middle of a cattle drive from spreading out.
- Tenderfoot:** someone who is naive and unused to the hardships of the Old West. Originally applied to cattle, later to humans.



**Tipi:** a conical hut made of hides sewn together and attached to a pole frame.

**Vaquero:** mounted herdsman, Spanish cowboy, buckaroo; term used by Mexican cowboys.

**Wickiup:** a domed hut made of a pole frame covered with brush, reed mats, grass, or hides. Used by the Apaches and other tribes in the Southwest, Great Basin, and California.

**Widowmaker:** an accident in which a rider's boot is caught in the stirrup and he is dragged behind the horse.

**Wigwam:** a domed hut, similar to a wickiup but covered with bark, animal skin, or woven mats. Common to Northeastern Indians and some Plains tribes.

**Wrangler:** handles the extra horses on a cattle drive.

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*The Quarter Horse*, by Walter D. Osborne. Grosset & Dunlap, New York, 1967.

*Railroad Maps of North America: The First Hundred Years*, by Andrew Modelski. Bonanza, 1987. Maps and authentic railroad propaganda.

*The Rocky Mountains: A Guide to the Inns of Colorado, Utah, Nevada, Idaho, Wyoming, and Montana*, by Terry Berger. Holt, 1983. A valuable resource for visualizing the Old West. Also in this series are *The Great Lakes*, *Pacific Northwest*, *The Southwest*, *California*, and *The Mississippi*.

*Seven Arrows*, by Hyemeyohsts Storm. Ballantine Books, New York, 1972. Presents Plains Indian tales in a context of the story of an Indian brave and his village. Excellent source for an all-Indian campaign.



*The Sioux: Life and Customs of a Warrior Society*, by Royal B. Hassrick. University of Oklahoma Press, Norman, OK, 1964. Includes information on tribal organization, customs, hunting, and the vision quest.

*The Story of English*, by Robert McCrum, William Cran, and Robert MacNeil. The Viking Press, New York, 1986. Includes a chapter on language and idioms of the Old West.

*The Story of the Frontier*, by Everett Dick. Tudor Publishing Company, New York. 1941 by D. Appleton-Century Company, Inc. Excellent source for everyday details for nearly every character type presented in **GURPS Old West**.

*Tales from the American Frontier*, edited, told, and retold by Richard Erdoes. Pantheon Books, NY, 1991.

*There Must Be a Lone Ranger*, by Jenni Calder. Hamish Hamilton Ltd., London, 1974.

*A Treasury of American Folklore*, edited by B.A. Botkin. Crown Publishers, New York, 1944. Stories, ballads, and traditions of the Old West and America – excellent source of tall tales and anecdotes.

*Weapons Through the Ages*, by William Reid. Crescent Books, 1976. Includes diagrams and illustrations of unusual 19th-century weapons.

*The Winning of the Far West*, by Robert McNutt McElroy. G.P. Putnam's Sons, New York, 1914. Good source of information on the territorial wars.

*The World of the American Indian*, by the National Geographic Society, Washington, D.C., 1974.

## FICTION

Any good general bookstore will have a Western selection. Well-known authors include Luke Short, Ernest Haycox, Zane Grey, Louis L'Amour, and Gordon Shirreff.

*The Haunted Mesa*, by Louis L'Amour. Bantam Books, New York, 1987. Set in the 20th century, it includes Indian magic, the Anasazi, and a *sipapu*.

*How the West Was Won*, by Louis L'Amour. Bantam Books, New York, 1962. Based on the original film version.

*The Lone Star Ranger*, by Zane Grey. Pocket Books, New York. 1915 by Zane Grey; 1942 by Lina Elise Grey. An innocent man is blamed for all the unsolved crimes in the territory. A Texas Ranger gives him a chance to clear his name.

*The Outlaws*, edited by Bill Pronzini & Martin H. Greenberg. Fawcett Gold Medal, New York, 1984. Anthology of short stories, part of "The Best of the West" series.

*The Tales of Alvin Maker*, by Orson Scott Card. Includes *Seventh Son*, *Red Prophet*, and *Prentice Alvin*. An American frontier where history isn't quite what one expects, and hexes and Indian magic work.

## FILM

Most of the movies directed by John Ford or Fritz Lang – or starring Randolph Scott, James Stewart, Henry Fonda, John Wayne, or Clint Eastwood – are bound to be good.

The following are a few of the Westerns the authors watched – and liked.

*Big Jake*, 1971, starring John Wayne. Wonderful piece about an old-time cowboy trying to rescue his kidnapped grandson.

*Blazing Saddles*, 1974, starring Cleavon Little and Gene Wilder. Mel Brooks, director. One of the best parodies ever!

*Butch Cassidy and the Sundance Kid*, 1969, starring Paul Newman and Robert Redford. George Roy Hill, director. Train robbers pursued by detectives flee to South America.

*The Cheyenne Social Club*, 1970, starring James Stewart and Henry Fonda. A cowboy inherits his brother's "profitable business" – which turns out to be a brothel.

*Fort Apache*, 1948, starring John Wayne. John Ford, director. A cavalry Western involving a futile charge into an ambush.

*The Good, the Bad, and the Ugly*, 1967, starring Clint Eastwood. Sergio Leone, director. Third in the trilogy of the Man with No Name, following *A Fistful of Dollars* and *For a Few Dollars More*.

*High Noon*, 1952, starring Gary Cooper. Fred Zinnemann, director. A sheriff finds himself alone, facing a man sworn to kill him.

*How the West Was Won*, 1963, starring practically every Western star and directed by Henry Hathaway, John Ford, and George Marshall. The adventures of a pioneer family through three generations.

*Little Big Man*, 1970, starring Dustin Hoffman and Chief Dan George. Arthur Penn, director. A boy kidnapped by the Sioux alternates between living with his tribe and life as a white man.

*The Magnificent Seven*, 1957, starring Yul Brynner and Steve McQueen. John Sturges, director. Seven gunfighters, each with a different motive, defend a Mexican village from bandits. Based on Kurosawa's *Seven Samurai*.

*The Searchers*, 1956, starring John Wayne. John Ford, director. A five-year search for girls abducted by Indians.

*The Shootist*, John Wayne. Don Siegel, director. Professional gunfighter tries in vain to die in peace.

*True Grit*, 1969, and sequel *Rooster Cogburn*, 1975, starring John Wayne. The adventures of an "over-the-hill" marshal.

*Unforgiven*, 1992, starring and directed by Clint Eastwood. Former outlaws and hired guns hunt down two cowboys who disfigured a prostitute.

*Union Pacific*, 1939, starring Joel McCrea. Cecil B. DeMille, director. A Union Pacific troubleshooter foils the plots of the rival Central Pacific.

*Western Union*, 1941, starring Randolph Scott. Fritz Lang, director. A former outlaw joins the formidable task of laying telegraph lines across the West.

And all those delightfully bad "spaghetti" Westerns!

## TV SHOWS

Most of these shows are available 24 hours a day, thanks to the miracle of cable TV!

*The Barbary Coast*, starring William Shatner.

*Big Valley*, the trials and tribulations of the Filthy Rich Barclay family.

*Bonanza*, in which the all-male Cartwright clan runs the Ponderosa ranch near Virginia City, Nev. Has nothing to do with ranching.

*Bordertown*, about a town that straddles the U.S.-Canadian border and has both a U.S. marshal and a Mountie.

*Gunsmoke*, Marshall Matt Dillon keeps law in Dodge City with the help of deputies Chester, Newly, and Festus.

*Guns of Paradise*, a retired gunfighter raises his sister's kids.

*Hondo*, about an army scout who is the adopted son of the Apache chief Victorio.

*How the West Was Won*, based on the movie (see above).

*Rifleman*, in which a retired, widowed rifleman raises his son.

*Wagon Train*, wending its endless way west.

*The Wild, Wild West*, where two Secret Service agents with a private train car and lots of fun gadgets foil evil villains' fantastic plots in a Western setting.





# OLD WEST CAMPAIGN PLAN

GM: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Campaign name: \_\_\_\_\_ Campaign's starting year: \_\_\_\_\_ Rate game time passes: \_\_\_\_\_

Campaign type: Picaresque or Episodic \_\_\_\_\_ Realistic, Cinematic, or Blend \_\_\_\_\_

Campaign backdrop: \_\_\_\_\_

## Campaign Historical Background:

\_\_\_\_\_ Earth's History (Can PCs change history?) \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ Alternate History (What's different?) \_\_\_\_\_

Campaign's starting date: \_\_\_\_\_ Recent historical events: \_\_\_\_\_

Campaign's Tech Level: \_\_\_\_\_ Major equipment not yet available: \_\_\_\_\_

## Campaign Setting:

(Picaresque) Starting location: \_\_\_\_\_ Final destination: \_\_\_\_\_

Likely route: \_\_\_\_\_ Major stops: \_\_\_\_\_

(Episodic) Primary location: \_\_\_\_\_ Secondary locations: \_\_\_\_\_

## Political/Economic Background:

Settled or Wilderness? \_\_\_\_\_ Territory or State? \_\_\_\_\_ Military Presence: \_\_\_\_\_

Population: \_\_\_\_\_ Primary occupations in area: \_\_\_\_\_

Existing Local Conflicts: \_\_\_\_\_

Effectiveness of local law enforcement: \_\_\_\_\_

Acceptable currency: \_\_\_\_\_ Scarce or abundant? \_\_\_\_\_ Standard gold prices: \_\_\_\_\_

Mining in the area? \_\_\_\_\_ If not, could there be? \_\_\_\_\_ How rich a strike? \_\_\_\_\_

Transportation/Communication available: \_\_\_\_\_

Indian tribes in area: \_\_\_\_\_

## Indian Magic:

Level of magic: \_\_\_\_\_ None \_\_\_\_\_ Unreliable \_\_\_\_\_ Fairly reliable \_\_\_\_\_ Spectacular

Guardian Spirit cost/Power Reserve level: Herbalist \_\_\_\_\_ Dreamer \_\_\_\_\_ Shaman \_\_\_\_\_

Guardian Spirit reaction modifiers: \_\_\_\_\_ Do sacred sites have normal mana levels? \_\_\_\_\_

Possible magical effects of medicine bundles: \_\_\_\_\_

Do fantastic creatures exist (Delgeth, Jackalope, Nashlah, etc.)? \_\_\_\_\_

## Player Character Information:

Base Wealth: \_\_\_\_\_ Starting Point Total: \_\_\_\_\_

Especially useful/useless character types: \_\_\_\_\_

Especially appropriate/inappropriate professions: \_\_\_\_\_

Especially useful advantages and skills: \_\_\_\_\_

Worthless advantages and skills: \_\_\_\_\_

Language(s) the PCs will need: \_\_\_\_\_

Possible Patrons: \_\_\_\_\_

Possible Ally Groups: \_\_\_\_\_

Possible Enemies: \_\_\_\_\_





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