



GHOST TOWNS





Ghost Towns

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GHOST TOWNS! AN EPIGRAPH SPECIAL REPORT

Tombstone, Arizona

Vol. 5, No. 14

Sunday, August 15, 1880

Author's Note

Most towns don't survive a year's exposure to the Weird West's dangers. Be it boomtown, trading post, aspiring county seat, or festering backwater, no matter how hardy or craven the residents might be, every town stands at risk of destruction by natural disaster, man's folly, or the myriad dangers lurking in the dark. At every turn, a settler's path is menaced by threats mundane, terrifying, and just plain queer. It's a wonder any towns survive at all.

Towns come and go all the time, you see, some prospering to become hives of finance and industry—like newcomer Potential, Arizona, or the great Dodge City—while others are ruined by corruption and conflict. Some towns get rail lines and others end up deserted. At times what seems like a blind alley turns into a new start, with Dead End, Arizona being a prime example. Every settlement exists on the brink of oblivion. With great effort and plentiful luck, some persist.

We at the *Tombstone Epitaph* have labored to make the threats plain—or at least known—over the years. Not wishing to flag in our pace or fail in our duly adopted task, we bring you a brief compendium of some of the West's weirdest new additions over the past few years. The name "Ghost Towns" is given due to their relative strangeness, not because they're deserted or falling to pieces. Some of them might be soon, though!



Plucked from nearly every region of the West, the Ghost Towns in this report represent up-and-coming hotbeds of weird events and terrifying tales, scientific advances and industry, and even new horizons of circus entertainment. But inspect carefully the accounts of the towns that follow, Perspicacious Reader, and walk gingerly down their streets if you visit. While some towns don't survive their first year, some unwary visitors don't survive their first *hour*. Take care you're not among them.

Your Chronicler,
Lacy O'Malley

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DEVIL'S BACKBONE

Location: Commonwealth of California

Population: 192

It's said even the Great Quake couldn't destroy Devil's Backbone, but time may yet achieve what the quake could not. Back in 1868 it was called Grayson Flats—as local folk spin the yarn—a humble, inland California burg with no remarkable history to speak of. It got all the history it needed when an aftershock tore through Grayson Flats in a fashion as spectacular as it was unlikely.

Finding itself at the epicenter of a titanic clash of geologic forces, most of the town and the rock projection it sits on were thrust nearly a thousand feet above the desert floor, and there it's been perched on its aerie to this day. One long, rocky ridge still leads to the mesa's top, "as crooked as the Devil's backbone" according to locals in recounting how the mysterious place got its name.

They don't recount much besides, for a veil of mystery has fallen over the town of Devil's Backbone—one only the *Epitaph* has pierced!

Untold Riches

Back in August of 1868, it's said, the locals picked themselves up and dusted off their britches and skirts, and set about assessing the damage. The town was more or less intact, though it now ended at a dizzying, lofty cliff on every side. Most of the structures that had been located along the edge of the

new mesa were obliterated. A few were sliced cleanly in half, and still teetered in place as the aftershocks passed.

Soon after, enterprising citizens discovered a fact they'd never have known if Grayson Flats had not been thrust into the sky. The great rocky bluff beneath their feet was a honeycomb of twisted caves and tunnels, packed with enormous quantities of ghost rock. Out of certain destruction, riches emerged instead. By all estimates, there was enough ghost rock under Grayson Flats to make everyone in town a millionaire.

When a curious scout discovered that a trail indeed still accessed the mesa top, there was joyous celebration in the streets. Miners fired six-shooters at the sky, whiskey bottles were uncorked, and songs were belted out by a thankful chorus of dusty, bedraggled survivors. They had no idea of the privations in store for them.

The Crooked Trail

Once the euphoria wore off, folks realized the outlook wasn't quite so rosy as first impressions implied. The crooked, perilous trail providing so-called "access" to Grayson Flats—with its new moniker of Devil's Backbone—was, in this reporter's view, a journey only a trained mountaineer would attempt without misgivings.

The Crooked Trail is narrow, crumbling, and terrifying. At any moment, a single misplaced step could

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lead to a deadly plunge of hundreds of feet. Certainly, most people in Devil's Backbone wouldn't dare even attempt it. A few of those who did were never heard from again.

No full accounting of this author's trip up or down the Crooked Trail can be given, due to a strange and pervasive vertigo which overtook my faculties during the soaring climb. Presumably, my guides took pains to ensure my safety. As I learned from the townsfolk upon my eventual arrival, I was lucky to be alive. According to local legend the trail is haunted by spiders as big as coyotes—no doubt related to the dreaded *terrantulas* of the Wild Southwest, which we at the *Epitaph* have previously reported on.

The trail leading to Devil's Backbone—elevation 913 feet—is also littered with fragments of ghost rock. It might sound like something out of the most fanciful tales of the Ghost Rock Rush of 1869, but this was no tall tale, witnesses insisted. Everywhere along the trail are strewn ghost rock nuggets ranging from thimble- to fist-sized, free for the taking. The main problem, of course, is that no one can take it anywhere.

Black-Hearted Bandito

Devil's Backbone isn't an easy place to reach. Even if one avoids the unnatural perils of the surrounding region, the base of the bluff on which Devil's Backbone perches is haunted by abominations of another sort—outlaws. Moreover, they've built a fortified encampment smack at the base of the

Crooked Trail, ready to snatch any ghost rock exported from the mesa.

Their leader, the most notorious of the lot, is a wanted murderer known as Emmett "Black Heart" Hartley. Don't let his short stature and skinny frame fool you, Reader. According to a victim who miraculously escaped Hartley's depredations, the outlaw is dangerous and unpredictable, and holds his minions in the thrall of fear.

"A few of us decided to leave town, and we survived the trail," said a victim who wished to remain anonymous. "Most of us, at least. Just when we thought we were in the clear, we came upon a crude stockade fence barring the way. When the masked men jumped out, they told us to put up our hands, and we wouldn't be hurt.

"But then Hartley slipped out from behind the gate, just like a snake, and started shooting into the mass of us. Just shooting and cackling his crazy laughter. I fell under a body and played dead while they cleaned out everyone's pockets, then crept away after dark. He left them all to rot in the desert sun, Hartley did. He's as evil a man as I've ever known."

We'll let the words of the witness be warning enough to you, Reader. Tread the trail with utmost caution! And avoid contact with "Black Heart" Hartley's band if at all possible, as they are dug-in and remarkably well-supplied for so remote a hideout. Some speculate the bandit might enjoy support from distant backers with deep pockets, but no proof of such collusion was offered or uncovered.

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Trapped!

There are no two ways about it: Devil's Backbone's remaining population is stuck. Unlikely to survive much longer, unable to escape due to the bandits' siege tactics, and many unwilling to simply walk away from the biggest lode of ghost rock they've ever seen, they cling to life. Several individuals around town have taken it upon themselves to do something about the situation, but they don't always see eye-to-eye.

The only business with its doors still open is the beloved Flat Top Saloon, run by Jane Carol—who's also the town marshal, by the way. Her business activities mostly amount to charity, sharing out what little food can be scrounged. With starvation staring them in the face, many have resorted to hunting unnaturally large spiders, then

roasting them over a slow fire. Several destitute locals swore to the dish's savory flavor, but others told of the sharp cramps and pains they endured for hours after eating spider meat. This reporter cannot attest to the flavor either way, as he declined to touch it.

Between Marshal Jane and Mayor Jedediah Hennessee—who possesses the remarkable knack of being able to find water where no one else can—the town persists.

Stairs to Nowhere

Travelers who gaze up toward Devil's Backbone from the desert floor on a clear day are treated to a curious sight. Among the busy miners hanging from the mesa top in their bosun's chairs, a wooden staircase extends from the mesa's top like a 400-foot-long skeletal arm, one bony finger pointing at the desert below. Brainchild of Devil's Backbone inventor John Fehler, the so-called "Stairs to Nowhere" represent only one of the scientist's attempts to engineer a safe route off the mesa.

Locals reported widespread support for the project until it became clear just how many buildings would have to be demolished to complete it. Fehler remains optimistic, but is unable to gather enough support to take down any more structures. As local entrepreneur Owen Halpin put it, "What happens if we pull the last plank from the last house, only to find that our staircase hangs a hundred feet—or even two-hundred feet—over the desert floor? What then? We would truly have nowhere to go."



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In spite of setbacks and opposition, John Fehler labors on, desperate to discover the egress. True, his Miraculous De-Elevator project was fatally stalled when it was discovered the town held no rope whatsoever, and his Trackless Rail Car was abandoned due to the fact that driving it down the Crooked Trail would almost certainly result in catastrophe. Fehler doesn't seem as though he'll be dissuaded from his task until his fellow citizens are safe.

A Ray of Light?

For all the rumors and hearsay surrounding Devil's Backbone, we at the

Epitaph have discovered a seldom-spoken truth: It's entirely possible to go there and get back safe and sound, as this reporter did. A small group of determined individuals—strong of will and sinew and alert to each others' distress—can navigate the precarious trail and avoid a long drop off a short cliff. Did we mention travelers need some luck, too?

Even with all those ingredients the trip isn't certain to end well, but there's at least a chance. It could be exactly what the folks of Devil's Backbone need to finally quit their prison, and cash in on their claims. Surely anyone who aided in such an endeavor would find themselves rich as well!



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GRANT'S PASS & XIN HUI-HUANG

Location: Disputed Territories,
south of the Sioux Nations

Population: 1,216

Like so many other towns, Grant's Pass was founded on high hopes. The original inhabitants staked their claim along the Oregon Trail just south of the Sioux Nations' border, with the expectation they could parlay their holdings into a major Union Blue railhead. From there, they believed, the Union's national rails would overrun the Sioux Nations and drive out their stubborn inhabitants. Like so many other places in the Weird West, what actually took place was undreamed of by the townsfolk.

For a while their new home at the mouth of the feature they named Grant's Pass was productive. A railhead was constructed, inhabitants rallied to present their home in the best possible light, and promoters were dispatched to major cities Back East to lure investors and settlers to what would surely become a new metropolis of the West. Slowly but surely, the industrious people of Grant's Pass laid track headed south, hoping Union Blue would link with them as soon as they took notice, and a deal could be struck.

In short order Union Blue signed on in a provisional fashion, sending various functionaries, security men, and rail warriors to the town. Little did they know someone else had already taken notice of their activities, someone who had no interest in seeing them succeed—Warlord Kang.

The Battle of Grant's Pass

Kang sent one of his trusted warriors, Yüan Cai, along with 20 men to wipe out the fledgling settlement. The journey wasn't without incident, as nearly half of Cai's men perished in a Sioux ambush. But he arrived at Grant's Pass with 12 brave rail warriors at his side, and they grimly set to work.

In short order Kang's operatives dynamited the nascent rail line, destroyed the work camp, and killed or scattered the rail crews. They advanced on the town, easily overwhelming what little defense could be mounted. That's when, according to the reports of eyewitnesses, things took a weird and horrifying turn.

To this day, none are willing to attest to Bayou Vermilion's involvement—or even interest—in the small town. Inquiries at the B.V. offices in Tombstone garnered no comment. Nevertheless, the very nature of the shambling, stinking, decaying plague that descended upon Grant's Pass just as the battle was joined points the finger directly at Baron La Croix. Yes, loyal Reader, the walkin' dead themselves rose from the earth all around town and followed the scent of tasty human flesh.

In the chaos, Yüan Cai found himself and his men battling for their very survival beside the people they'd come here to defeat. It's said the fight lasted all night, with the outcome always in doubt,

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until the morning sun illuminated a main street choked with cadavers. But Grant's Pass had survived.

Surprising Settlers

Yüan Cai had a change of heart that night. The bonds forged in battle proved stronger than loyalty to Kang, so Cai humbly asked the people of Grant's Pass if he could join them as a friend. Stunned, but still keenly aware of the previous night's attacks, the townsfolk argued bitterly and at length, according to all reports.

Cai found an unlikely ally in Union Blue security man Simon Colin. He'd also survived the plague of deaders, and he spoke passionately in favor

of letting Cai and his men stay. Eventually the matter was settled in the newcomers' favor, and the people set about the important tasks of burying the dead and making repairs before the Sioux noted their vulnerability. If they were skeptical before, when they saw how hard the ex-Iron Dragon men worked to repair the damage they'd caused they were certainly reassured.

An informal survey found that some in Grant's Pass still hold a grudge, but a significant number of people have united against persistent external threats, such as the Sioux war bands or a possible return by Bayou Vermilion's unholy forces.



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A City Divided

Cai built his home in the rocky opening of Grant's Pass, founding the small settlement he called "Xin Huihuang." In the years since, Xin Huihuang has grown from a tent city and mere appendage to a bustling settlement of its own, forever connected with but also divided from Grant's Pass to the south. It is not so much prejudice or suspicion that keeps the towns separate, but rather the origins of their association—some refuse to let bygones be bygones. They can't or won't forget what Cai and his men intended to do before their change of heart.

Xin Huihuang has become a haven for Chinese settlers, and their homes fill the pass itself, rising up the steep slopes. A few lend a distinctly Chinese flavor to the city's architecture. But not only the Chinese have found Grant's Pass and Xin Huihuang a welcoming place. In fact, to this reporter's eyes it appeared as if every nation on earth had sent its representatives to people this little plot of land. While they retain some customs and treasure their heritage, nearly every man and woman is bent to the task of helping the town survive.

With all the dangers lurking about, and what rancor remains among citizens, it's a good thing most of them work together! With current developments, however, even those strong bonds may begin to fray.

Threats New & Old

The Sioux remain a constant peril, especially to hunting parties in the pass. Small bands of Sioux raid the town on a regular basis, stealing horses,

counting coup on various enemies, and setting fire to buildings. In response Cai and his right-hand-man Simon Colin have endeavored to organize the townsfolk into a Vigilance Committee. So far the attempts have been less than a rousing triumph, according to disgruntled eyewitnesses. By the same token, the Sioux haven't yet managed to burn Grant's Pass to the ground, so they must be doing something right.

With the influx of Chinese settlers have come representatives of the California Triads, powerful and ruthless gangs that rule cities such as Shan Fan. Others serve Warlord Kang, as we made plain in prior issues of the *Epitaph*. But never before has the Triads' influence spread so far into the heart of the Union. The so-called "tongs"—rival gangs of kung-fu practitioners—engage in open combat in Xin Huihuang's streets, in defiance of Cai's decree and Simon Colin's imposing presence. By all reports, the situation is due to get worse before it gets any better.

And with all that plagues the good fortunes of Grant's Pass, to this reporter's eyes a definitive *lack* of weirdness persists. There is foreboding here, like everywhere else in the Weird West, and the shadow of the walkin' dead plague in its history hangs like a thick gray cloud over everything. But unlike most places, it's quiet—far *too* quiet. Whether it's a return engagement by Bayou Vermilion, or some other strange terror that has yet to show its face, visitors to Grant's Pass are advised to keep their eyes wide open, and note well the shadow creeping closer. Best of luck!

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CULVERTON

Location: Tributary of the Mississippi River

Population: 5,032

Culverton was the creation of a rich Canadian expatriate named Eric Culver. Purchasing 4,800 acres at the prime rate of 12 cents each, he endured the derision of those who doubted his mission. No matter to the wealthy Culver; he fully expected his town to become a major center of commerce between the many states whose borders touched the banks of the mighty Mississippi River.

He didn't count on the War Between the States, nor the arrival of one "Pirate Buckley," a Union loyalist-turned-privateer bent on using Culverton as a staging area for raids against Confederate cities and supply lines. In short order Buckley's brutal pirates took over the town, wresting control from the elder Mayor Culver and his supporters. Tragically, Eric Culver lived long enough to see all his grand dreams wither and finally die.

The Legend of Pirate Buckley

With Mayor Culver out of the picture, Buckley set about firming up his hold on the town. He put his own men in all the positions of influence, and assumed the name of Carlton Smith, as well as the lofty title "Official Naval Trade Consultant." Though all these details came to light, and to the keen ears of the *Tombstone Epitaph*, much later, at the time it was as if Pirate Buckley faded

from view. He was a constant threat, yet he seemed not to exist.

Buckley's vessel, the *Blue Gibbon*, was feared up and down the Mississippi for its daring and brutal raids on Confederate holdings. It was said the *Blue Gibbon* could vanish from sight at a word from Buckley, and thus evade all pursuit. Numerous eyewitness reports attested to the fact. Some whispered that Buckley and his men had promised their souls to the Devil, and in return the adversary gave them their infernal skills. Still others swore that Buckley had actually died during one of his earliest raids, yet he commanded the *Blue Gibbon* with a spirit too ruthless to move on.

The legend of Buckley's depredations grew over the years, as the war ground on and on, making meat out of men. When a ceasefire finally brought fragile peace to North America, no one knew if Buckley lived, if he'd become a ghost, or if he rested in some watery grave. When the tales got weird enough and circulated far enough, they found the ears of a Texas Ranger. From that moment on, Buckley's days were numbered.

Hell Comes to Culverton

Texas Rangers aren't the type to forgive and forget, especially not when such heinous crimes against the Confederacy as committed by Buckley are involved. One rode into the region and took to the riverboats, canvassing every eyewitness he could round up. That Ranger visited every town, pier,

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ranch, plantation, trading post on the river, allowing no lead, however tenuous, to languish uninvestigated. In a few months' time, triangulation of all known sightings of the *Blue Gibbon* pointed toward a few likely hiding spots, the prime suspect being Culverton. Then that Ranger went missing, and wasn't heard from again.

But that was far from the end of their stubborn involvement. The next Ranger, Capt. Brant Fulgham, quickly discovered nearly all the town council was loyal to Pirate Buckley, or even knew him personally. When the link between "Naval Trade Consultant" Carlton Smith and Buckley was established—that they were one and the same—it was all but over for the

storied privateer. A Ranger riled is like a force of nature.

Perhaps startled a little more than he let on that a Confederate town could be so thoroughly undermined, Capt. Fulgham reacted with overwhelming force. A series of dynamite and gunpowder explosions rocked the port as he and his posse scuttled every ship in the harbor. A series of running gun battles raged through the streets, as Buckley's supporters and accomplices were cut down. Finally Buckley surrendered—by hanging himself from a beam in the General Store he'd holed up in. It's said the strains of a Ranger Regimental Band drove him to his suicide...

Justice done, the matter was closed.

The Legend Reborn

Since the Texas Rangers intervened, Culverton's fortunes have been looking up. Long after Eric Culver's death, it seems his dreams of a major trade center may never come true. But the town bearing his name is prosperous nonetheless, handling a respectable amount of river trade, and gaining more traction from the burgeoning tourist industry. Few people seem willing or able to put Pirate Buckley behind them. If anything, today his legend is larger than ever before.

Culverton has become a grand city always keen to outdo itself. Twice now it's thrown its hat into the ring to become capital of the CSA, and twice it has failed. That hasn't dampened the spirits of the locals, in whom a strong competitive fire is stoked. In short, there doesn't seem to be any achievement Culverton's industrious folks won't try to best. For all their progress, and the



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new arrivals coming to live there every day, it seems the town will always be beholden to its history and origins.

The Legend of Pirate Buckley has indeed refused to die, just as—some say—Pirate Buckley was too implacable to be killed by a mere hanging. A healthy tourism industry has sprung up around famous sites such as Buckley's Roost north of town, the spot in the General Store where the pirate was hanged, and the place in port where the *Blue Gibbon* is said to have capsized and sank.

Persistent Fears

Despite the seeming frivolity of these diversions, an almost palpable dread pervades local peoples' lives. Some whisper that the *Blue Gibbon*, now a ghost ship full

of bloodthirsty, blue-bellied specters, still rides the muddy Mississippi tides. A local rag called the *Culverton Soothsayer*—no doubt attempting to rival the *Epitaph*'s popularity—prints stories of the weird and unexplained every chance they get, and they get plenty of chances. Oft-repeated and much dreaded are the tales of Pirate Buckley himself: that only a Texas Ranger's bullet can put him down for good.

We at the *Epitaph* were unable to get at the truth of the matter due to suspected interference by citizens loyal to the *Soothsayer*, although such allegations remain unproven and no formal charges have been filed. In lieu of reliable witnesses, the *Epitaph* calls upon visitors to Culverton to furnish their own reports of the weird events that persist there. Normal rates for contributors apply.



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JOSEPHINE

Location: The Great Northwest

Population: 624

To arrive in the bucolic environs of Josephine is to be transported from the Pacific Northwest evergreens to some European countryside. With the forests held at bay by hale woodsmen, a patchwork quilt of manicured fields flourish, separated by tall, straight hedgerows. On the horizon rise white peaks that might as well be the Swiss Alps. Once one hears the clattering of hooves on Josephine's narrow, cobbled streets, and gazes about at the Old Country inns and chateaus, the transport is complete.

But when night falls, and the moon hangs bloated in the sky like a rotten hunk of yellow-gray cheese, a different aspect of the Old Country creeps into view. The keening cry of a wolf echoes over the far hills, answered by a yapping, unnatural chorus. Dark, leafless trees reach toward the sky like the desperate hands of dying prey. The locals shutter their windows, turn down the lamps, and pray for the best until morning's light. After a night when no one vanishes, they pray in gratitude. Dear Reader, I saw their fear and it was real.

A Cursed City?

The residents of Josephine are welcoming and generous, with a full arsenal of delicious cuisine to mobilize in said generosity. But they tend to remain tight-lipped when

inquiries about *weird occurrences* are posed. Having befriended several Josephinians at a fine establishment called The Leaping Deer Inn, I was able to catch them in less-guarded moments, and their candor was instrumental in the writing of this report. For reasons at which I can only guess, they stipulated anonymity.

What most residents believe—but never speak aloud—is that Josephine is a cursed city. Evil creatures of the forests are drawn to it like moths to a flame, not to mention the ravenous wolf packs so common in the region. A rabid grizzly terrorized the village a few winters ago, slaying eight before it could be killed. Then there's the matter of churches—*bad things* tend to happen to them in Josephine. After enough fires, lightning strikes, and unexplained fatal accidents, the people here just gave up and stopped building them.

So how did the curse originate? Josephine was named for the daughter of the man who founded it in 1865, Manfred Amsler. A beautiful, ginger-haired girl, Josephine Amsler was known around town as much for her kindness as her looks. She loved to walk along the mountain paths and pick wildflowers, which she would fashion into gift bouquets for her family and friends.

One day she returned from her usual walk pale and trembling, and fell into a long sickness during which she was seldom seen. Eventually she

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perished. Her father Manfred kept to himself more and more. And ever since then the curse has held the town in its icy grip.

Hard Winters

For all the Old Country cuisine to be had in Josephine—fine cheeses, lean beefsteaks, a bedazzling variety of chocolates—when winter's snow begins to fall the people know there's a hard row to hoe ahead. Just like in the Great Maze and similar regions, around Josephine even canned foods spoil in the jar. Provisions wither away under whatever baleful influence pervades the land. And

in such conditions, starvation rips through town like a wildfire across a prairie.

Travelers in the area should take care, especially in winter but year-round, to pack enough food and beware the open roads at night. Reports persist of furry, bipedal creatures menacing folks with abandon, and even a few attacks—one of which left a man dead. Whether these are the fabled sasquatches (proof of whose existence is still sought!), flesh-eating *wendigos* of Native legend, or some other, as yet unidentified, threat, none could say for sure. What's certain is there's

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more at work here than winter's cold; something quite unnatural and malevolent dwells in this little slice of the Old World.

Conspiracy of Silence

Amsler Mansion still looms over the town of Josephine, though its namesake and her father Manfred are long dead. Their descendants live there, though, and sometimes they're seen cruising over the cobblestones in their coach with curtains drawn. Curiously, residents close their shutters or simply avert their eyes when the dark coach passes. A few are seen to visibly sigh in relief after it passes. Most importantly, though a few people will speak of the curse in rare circumstances, no one *ever* speaks of the Amslers.

Clearly the current Amslers have some knowledge of how the town's troubles got started, or might shed light on its current predicament. Receiving naught but a blank stare when I posited this to a companion, I avowed to discover the truth of the matter.

Here at the *Epitaph*, we go the extra mile to bring you a story. In this case, the extra mile was this reporter's walk out to the Amsler Mansion, since no one would give him a ride there. Expecting some evidence of bloodshed, murder, or other bloodcurdling activity as would typically be described in these pages, imagine my surprise at being welcomed by a courteous, hospitable

pair—brother and sister, cousins of the original ill-fated inhabitants. Truthfully, I was a bit crestfallen.

At the home of Stefan and Jolene Amsler I was treated to a sumptuous, eight-course meal, followed by brandy and cigars on a wide, marble veranda that juts from the rear of the manor. Most importantly, I was able to converse at length with the city's unofficial guardians and caretakers.

The Amslers admitted that they determined matters of law and punishment, and perhaps some prior, harsh decision had led to the townsfolk's reluctance to discuss them. But, they added, justice in so unkind a place as this must be maintained with a steady hand. "The people of Josephine have far more to fear from starvation and wolves than they do from any Amslers," Stefan said. In this reporter's estimation, the man's sentiment was genuine.

Two Worlds Adjoined

In more mundane news, Josephine still has a few reminders of its place in the Weird West rather than rolling Alpine foothills. Particularly, the town has become a minor hub of trade with local Indian tribes. Native crafts and furs are traded in town for civilization's accoutrements, like steel knives and firearms. The Indian trappers and traders serve as a vital source of information for Josephine's isolated folk, and a lifeline to the outside world. They sure can use one!

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HOPE FALLS

Location: The Wild Southwest

Population: 792

Of all the places to raise a city in the dry Southwest, a green oasis fed by a natural spring and surging waterfall is a fairly good start. One thing Hope Falls has never wanted for is water, and in that regard it's fairly unique among the strange locales and eerie burgs of the desert's expanse.

But even more than water, a Western town's fortunes are driven by commerce. When local prospectors struck a sizeable vein of copper things looked up, and when ghost rock was struck approximately 10 miles north, the town's imminent enrichment seemed a sure thing. The only remaining tasks were to secure a Bayou Vermilion spur, and to sit back and watch themselves get rich—or so they thought.

Opportunists & Railroad Men

Speculators ran rampant, selling extensive parcels of desert land at inflated prices. Saloons, brothels, gambling dens, and all the purveyors of sin came to roost like vultures, but not even the vice lords could turn the townsfolk from their quest for wealth. So fixated were they on the money they were about to make, no one noticed when their boomtown status was stolen right out from under their feet.

Harold G. Shelton, a "town promoter" who was wanted Back East on fraud charges, managed to break ground

on a new settlement not 20 yards from the ghost rock strike. It was later determined that the purchase and incorporation of Sheltonsville were based on entirely non-existent capital promised by Mr. Shelton. But by the time anyone figured out what he'd done, the initial investment was paid back 100 times over, Harry Shelton was long gone, and the Sheltonsville town council held a brand-new Bayou Vermilion Railroad contract.

All Hope Falls had was copper and water. The bustling population of over 2,000 steadily shrank to its current number...and continues to fall.

Oasis of Fear

Those who remain walk in fear of mysterious killers. Reports circulate of some strange animal that has come in from the desert to make its den in Hope Falls. Victims seem to have been mauled by hundreds of tiny claws and teeth, leading some to speculate that a new, bizarre form of water rat has taken up residence in their midst. Moreover, several of the victims were children whose deaths have spread waves of unease through neighborhoods abutting the Hope River.

The Disappearing Lawman

The people of Hope Falls are stubborn and garrulous, willing to chat about anything over a glass of whiskey or a cup of coffee. Nearly all of them tell the tale of Leonard Cave, the disappearing lawman of Hope Falls.

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Leonard Cave was renowned hereabouts for his unimpeachable character. He always abstained from drink, and received no bribes from any business owner—a practice thought noble by some and merely stupid by others. He enjoyed no man or woman's company unless he'd raised a posse for some specific task, and he kept his own counsel on matters of import. Most of all, he kept Hope Falls buttoned up and safe from mayhem.

And what did Leonard Cave get for being so noble? A two-bit, no-good outlaw from El Paso ventilated him with a Gatling shotgun hidden under his poncho. Moreover, Cave's corpse disappeared right out from under the smoke of the gunfight that killed him, and he was never seen again. Most presume the body ended up in the desert, consumed by coyotes and vultures.



When a local tells the tale, one can't help wonder if it serves as an allegory for Hope Falls' noble intentions, and what became of them.

Derringer's Wonders

It's not all gloom and doom in Hope Falls, at least not to hear Mr. Aldo Derringer tell it. A distant cousin of Henry Derringer—eponymous inventor of the ubiquitous firearm—Aldo has brought to Hope Falls one of the few tangible benefits remaining to its citizens. With the help of his Power Station, most of Hope Falls is lit by electricity!

I had the honor of visiting the Hope Falls Power Station and receiving a tour by Mr. Derringer himself. He is known for several wondrous inventions, including a suit of personal armor and a so-called "Weathersphere" capable of producing powerful, highly localized winds. But all of these New Science marvels work by means of a shaped ghost rock core, burned to produce steam power.

A large, squat building of imported brick and local limestone, the Power Station harnesses water's natural power, rather than heating it into steam. Enormous turbines, spun by the waterfall's never ending torrent, hum in metal cylinders to produce what Mr. Derringer called "an electrical current." Turning a river's current into an electrical one—a nifty trick, that!

With the electrical current homes, businesses, and streetlamps are lit, and the electricity can also be used to power various New Science devices (which poses few of the risks associated with ghost rock exposure). I noted the

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turbines themselves, operating on a principle Derringer named "hydro-electricity," produce none of the howls associated with burning ghost rock.

Mr. Derringer's latest project involves the export of electricity, with Sheltonsville the first customer. Power lines are being run across the desert even now by Derringer's crews. Derringer figures if Sheltonsville has the revenue and the rail line, this is the most likely way to tap into it. Plenty of folks around town call him crazy, but a few expressed cautious optimism. It was reassuring to see hope hasn't died entirely.



Faster Than Lightning

Note everyone in Hope Falls is convinced of electricity's benefits, focusing instead on tales of Power Station workers literally fried to death. Mr. Derringer doesn't deny that a few accidental deaths have occurred on his watch, but he maintains steadfastly that his power is clean and safe. Yet tales of the Lightnin' Man continue to make the rounds.

Superstition is difficult to sway with knowledge. No matter how the science of electricity is explained, tale-tellers insist a bolt of "the juice" can leap across open air, hide inside a rain barrel, or creep along the riverbank until it finds prey to shock. "And it ain't no little shock," said one such wag. "It's a jolt through the core like you never thought possible. A man does a crazy sort of jig, his hair smoking, and falls dead and scorched. That's how the Lightnin' Man gets you."

Some even claim to have seen the Lightnin' Man walking along the streets at night, disappearing in a flash when he was sighted and leaving no trace. Then again, others insist the nightly walker who disappears in a flash could be none other than Leonard Cave, Hope Falls' own vanishing lawman. Time, and further investigation, will tell!

City in Decline

Many of Hope Falls' businesses and residences, built during the initial boom, stand abandoned and empty, lending a lonely feel to much of the town. There's still life here, but it seems to be dying out before one's eyes. What's for certain is all the town's hopes for prosperity rest upon Aldo Derringer and his Power Station.

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RULAMER

Location: Great Maze

Population: 187

Of all the Great Maze's fabled hidden pirate coves, Maze rat cities, and buccaneers' hideaways, the latest to catch the public imagination is a place called Rulamer. No one can say for sure where it lies, and it's marked on no map. But the continuing raids of its vessels—in defiance of Kang's authority—attest to its existence.

So fret not, Loyal Reader, for the *Epitaph* was able to secure an exclusive round trip to Rulamer, to see its putative wonders with our own eyes. This reporter was not disappointed—more like stunned!

Wreck of the Seigneur Chanceux

The skipper who agreed to take me on the "Rulamer Run" spilled the beans on some of the pirate haven's history. In the old salt's words, "This must have been back in 1869, at the height of the initial ghost rock rush, when the fever was driving men to risky decisions, and many to their doom.

"A French sailing vessel—the *Seigneur Chanceux*—found itself deep in the channels, in a spot that was landlocked before the quake. There they were set upon by a Maze dragon. It killed most of the crew and the captain, and the ship was smashed to flinders against the channel wall, but some escaped in the ship's boat. They were the few who founded Rulamer."

The captain made me put on a blindfold, and we spoke no more.

Despite lack of sight, I could tell the route to Rulamer was dangerous, and hard on the old salt's vessel. I was tossed about in my cabin as the ship negotiated the channel, and could hear waves crashing against the prow. Several times the skipper cried out in dismay or anger, and once a sickening crunch seized the hull, followed by a long grinding of wood and metal against rocks. But true to his word he got us to Rulamer, so I happily paid the charter fee and took my leave of him.

Lay of the Land

It's easy to see why the shipwreck's survivors chose to plant themselves on that particular beach. A small, deep harbor filled with steam and sailing vessels sits surrounded by a wide, bowl-shaped mesa, its hills stretching gradually up from the docks. The Great Quake shattered the mesa into a number of distinct sections, and these are now linked by a network of rope bridges and wooden trestles. The "streets of water," or *rue l'mer*, between them lent the city its name, and now are plied by small vessels.

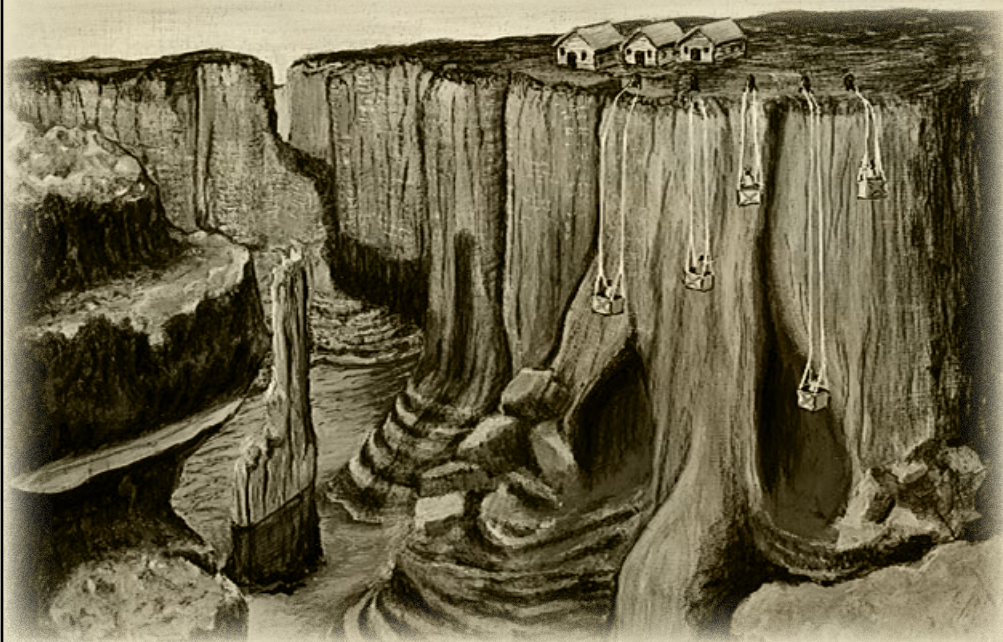
Huddled near the docks are a number of establishments catering to the small but boisterous pirate population. Everywhere sailors carouse and spend their hard-earned pay. The Anchor Saloon offers the usual spirits and beers, along with faro games, and most other other vices can be indulged in Rulamer

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as well. But evidence is also apparent of a more rural population, and a Chinese one at that: Farmhouses dot the hillsides above town. Rice is cultivated in a few spots on the mesa, and a few water purifiers—including one with astoundingly overpriced wares owned by a gang of scoundrels calling themselves Brun's Boys—operate on the mesa to keep folks properly hydrated.

After I'd taken my leave of Brun's Boys' establishment, I later found myself glad I'd not raised a real ruckus. Informants claim Brun's Boys have their fingers in most of Rulamer's commerce, by virtue of their leader Brun Desmarais, a cagey sailor who parleyed his small fortunes into something much greater.

Opposing Brun's Boys are those loyal to Bedivere Webbe, a former British sailor and, by all accounts, tough nut indeed. Taking the safe route between these enemies proved a paltry source of information, but we are sure our Wise Readers now know enough to remain safe.

Are Rulamer's Days Numbered?

The talk around Rulamer always turns to Warlord Kang eventually, and one detects a deep wariness among the locals when they speak of the triad leader and Rail Baron. Everyone has heard stories of Kang's functionaries, operatives, soldiers, and spies actively working to unlock the secret of Rulamer's location. But a few whisper darkly that spies may *already* have

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infiltrated the jigsaw mesa. They could be among that crowd waiting for water at Brun's Boys', or perhaps one of Mr. Webbe's kung-fu-wielding toughs. No concrete evidence was forthcoming, yet the air of paranoia was thick.

On the way out of Rulamer—once I'd managed to secure a berth on Captain Millicent Schork's modified Maze runner, not an easy task—hard evidence of Kang's intentions was on full display. The channels in the vicinity of Rulamer, although deep in the Maze, are patrolled by a number of Kang's vessels, an ominous black ironclad among them.

Captain Schork's vessel, the *Dragon's Caress*, was detained by a pair of Kang's gunboats, who trained Gatlings on us and demanded to know our port of call. Schork maintained we were sailing out of Goodwill—a claim difficult for Kang's men to verify, given the town's association with the rival New Tomorrow Triad—but they simply weren't buying it.

Luckily, a flourish of my press pass and complimentary copies of the latest issue of the *Tombstone Epitaph* were sufficient to distract the men from their duty and interest them in publicizing their own exploits. All were keen to pose for photographs with their weapons brandished. (Those loyal to Warlord Kang please note—the author wished only to escape safely, not to conspire in keeping Rulamer's secret, and we sincerely hope no offense is taken. Let these admissions act as *mea maxima culpa*. —Ed.)

But it seems we've gotten ahead of ourselves, Dear Reader, for the encounter with Kang's vessels of war happened only after we evaded Rulamer's darkest secret...

The Seigneur Chanceux Returns!

Along the Rulamer Run out of town, Captain Schork deftly managed the water hazards which reared their ugly heads. She called them by names ranging from the exotic "water dogs" to the chillingly blunt "riptide"—I imagined our tiny vessel literally torn in half, and we spilling out into the cold brine. In a narrow passage between high cliffs, we were overtaken by a chill, damp darkness that might have been fog. I say "might" because I could not be sure what sort of pall had fallen on us. It was slightly oily to the touch, and blotted out the sun.

In the moment of greatest fear a great, dark sailing vessel loomed from nowhere, its tattered sails framed by sickly moonlight. The shadow of its prow fell upon us, and it was only by virtue of Captain Schork's skilled piloting that we were spared being run down and sunk. As the *Dragon's Caress* bobbed helplessly on the black ship's wake, we could see its deck teeming with the dead. Once sailors, now they were skeletons draped with black and green sea wrack, screaming their eternal agony and hatred. And the name on the side of the vessel read *Seigneur Chanceux*.

Be vigilant in the waters near Rulamer, Dear Readers, and keep your eyes peeled for events and phenomena even more strange!

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WAGONSEND

Population: 600-2,000+

In many towns, it's not uncommon for a traveling circus to visit once or twice a year, provided reasonable access to a major trail or rail line. In stark contrast, nearly the *entire town* of Wagon send is a circus, making it unique among the Weird West's odd locales. Since its founding this way stop of wonders has grown from a simple midway and big top to an entire town based on the proposition that every man and woman has the right to be entertained. Surely this is a noble—if modest—cause!

But there's another side to Wagon send, one that shows itself in the dead of night, or in deserted side-streets. Visitors traveling alone have been known to disappear from the midway at the height of the crowd's rush, and children separated from their folks are often never seen again. At times the bright, pealing music of the steam-powered calliope assumes an unpleasant, chilling aspect and the tents a garish and threatening hue. The screams of delight from freak tents could be shrieks of agony, and images of evil and despair seem to leer from every shadow and funhouse mirror.

A Mayor by Any Other Name

For all its oddness and quirks, we wouldn't want to detract too much from Wagon send's entertainment value, Discerning Reader. The town offers welcome diversion for settlers and travelers beset by myriad troubles, and

the value of such a place in times such as we now face cannot be overstated.

However, to gain the full value of one's leisure dollars it pays to learn some of the local lingo. It could save you a trip to the Strongman's office, *amigo*!

When the late, great J. T. Boniface founded his grand experiment in entertainment, he wanted to adopt as much of a circus-like atmosphere as possible. To this end, he retitled all the top positions in town to his liking. The mayor is called the *Ringmaster*. Instead of a marshal, Wagon send has a *Strongman*, with deputies called *Strongarms*. Mail carriers are *Barkers*, the president of the Chamber of Commerce a *Busker*, and saloon owners referred to as *Clowns*. And if one of your trail buddies up and dies on you, Poor Reader, you'll need to call the local *Knife Thrower*—mortician, that is!

A Fine Place to Visit...

The population of Wagon send reportedly dips as low as 600 during off-peak times, and swells as high as 2,000 or more on warm Sundays in fine weather. Its location near a confluence of several rail lines allows families to travel as many as a hundred miles for a chance to experience Wagon send's wonders for a day. In the sunshine, the midway full of breathless revelers, the place inspires a profound sense of happiness. "We traveled here with Papa and Mama in a steam locomotive," said one smiling, 12-year-

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old circus-goer from farm country. "So far, it has been a delight."

Tourists aside, the native population—most of which dwells in a sprawling tent city surrounding the town proper—remains high when traveling sideshows are wintered, or when weather or other major events (skirmishes of the Great Rail Wars being only one example) preclude touring the region and farther afield.

Wagonsend is full of professional clowns, lion tamers, freak show attendants and freaks, acrobats, and

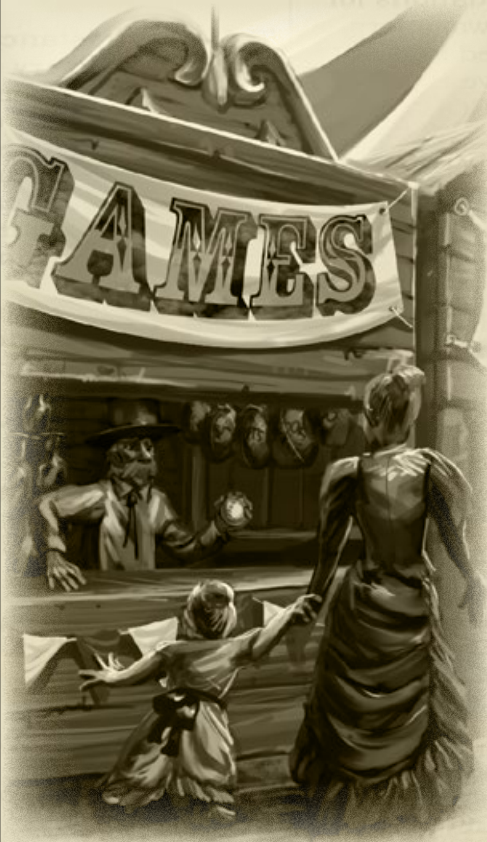
musicians. Like nearly every other center of commerce in the West, a vibrant service economy has sprung up in town to provide drink and diversion for the professionals—and soak up their wages!

The midway is chock full of games of chance and skill, barkers selling refreshments—liquor chief among them—and other wares, the aforementioned freak show tents, brass bands providing all the *oompah* a body can stand, and clowns and other performers putting on a show for anyone willing to toss a few coins in the hat. Without a doubt, what passes for a "Main Street" in Wagonsend offers almost every diversion a person could desire.

...Let's Hope We Can Leave!

At times the air of frivolity reaches such a fevered pitch that violence explodes, leaving locals or visitors dead or dying. Gun or knife fights in Wagonsend's lanes are not uncommon. At times the air of mirth borders on mania, and the crowds of the midway and the big top feel dangerous, seething, as though any second a lone traveler might be attacked. It was, admittedly, a curious feeling, but one I could not dismiss upon experiencing it, nor rationalize later.

Visitors to Wagonsend ought to keep in mind the rash of disappearances spanning the past few years, and keep a keen eye trained over their shoulders. One eyewitness spoke of being stalked through the streets by a group of shadowy figures who called his name but wouldn't answer his challenges. Another recounted a tale of narrowly escaping the grip of a strange man wearing a sackcloth mask, only to notice the man had half-a-



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dozen masked accomplices at his side. After a spirited chase the intended victim ducked into an open saloon door to save his life. Other visitors tell similar tales, and not all have such happy endings!

Restless Things

In the last six months or so, reports of hauntings are on the rise in Wagonsend. But these aren't your typical ghosts, moaning and clanking chains together as you'd read in a gothic novel, and appearing as transparent, wispy shades of human beings. They're rather *animate objects*, intent on causing bodily harm!

That's right, Astute Reader, this reporter spoke with numerous citizens who'd been attacked, accosted, or otherwise detained by objects that seemed to possess wills of their own. One gentleman reported a sapling uprooting itself to pursue him along a shady lane, reaching out to grab at the nape of his neck with long, leafy arms. A woman told the tale of being seized and nearly suffocated by the flap of a tent.

Another lady, fresh out of Pennsylvania and still green to the West's ways, was shocked to look into the mirror of an antique vanity she'd carted with her, only to see what she described as "a horrid face—pale and wild-eyed and red-mouthed—staring back at me from the glass, cackling in a host of voices, like a devils' chorus. It so troubled me that I could do naught but put the vanity up for sale."

Send in the Clowns

If vanished folks and poltergeists weren't enough, disturbing stories of the clowns of Wagonsend have begun

to circulate. How disturbing, you ask? Let's just say the next time you see a sad clown—or especially a *happy* one—it's best to head in the opposite direction with a good deal of pep in your step.

Many of Wagonsend's clowns have assumed bizarre and unnerving costumes in ongoing attempts to outdo each other for the crowd's attention. A good number seem somehow deformed in their posture and gait, as though the freaks are leaving the tents to begin careers in clowning. Altercations between performers and visitors are on the rise, and Ringmaster (that's mayor, remember?) Thornton Fessler seems at a loss to explain the events or prevent them occurring again.

What's undeniable is that eyewitnesses have reported lone pedestrians set upon by packs of clowns. An offensive stench seems to permeate the performers' tents. And most disturbing of all, Wagonsend's children whisper blood-curdling stories of a clown called "Big Botho," taller than any of the others, with blank, gleaming eyes and a slack, grinning mouth that drips drool under his bright red nose. "Better get home before Big Botho finds you," they tease each other...but the fear is audible in their voices.

This reporter was unable to put the matter to rest by proving or disproving Big Botho's existence. After a close call of my own with over-enthusiastic jesters—who also happened to be pickpockets—the decision was made to let the matter rest. As always, further reports from any of our Loyal Readers on the scene are solicited and welcomed.

Introduction

The towns of the Weird West are legion, but information about them tends to be scarce. *Deadlands: Ghost Towns* aims to remedy that situation, pardner, by supplying a number of interesting burgs in various regions, all of which can be dropped into a campaign whenever—and wherever—the Marshal wants to spring them on an unwary posse.

Part of what keeps a posse *unwary* is they don't read the Marshal's material before play begins. So if you're a player and you haven't taken the hint by now, it's best you vamoose before secrets that ought to stay kept are spoiled instead. That's right, amigo, just put the book down *real easy* and back away.

How to Use This Book

All right, Marshal, let's get a move on. As we've said, *Ghost Towns* gives you a number of ready-made municipalities set in just about every major region of the Weird West. They're not detailed down to the last building and inhabitant—that way there's room to add your own creations—but each town's history, physical layout, major players, and interesting storylines are provided to give your group a good start. Unless the cowpokes decide to settle in and stay a while, most times it's all the information a Marshal needs.

When you use one of these towns as a set piece for your story—a destination, or the site of a major event—give your heroes a reason to visit, beyond the fact

that it's there. Look to the characters' backstories and Hindrances for ways to motivate them. Foreshadow the town's importance with NPCs who speak of it beforehand, and by all means provide your players with the *Tombstone Epitaph* story concerning the locale before they arrive.

On the other hand, you can always plop one down as the town that just happens to be over the next rise. In this case, the posse comes into town “cold,” and has to get things heated up by poking their noses where they don't belong. Using the major characters, conflicts, and *Savage Tales*, a cunning Marshal can provide all the trouble her group's liable to get up to. Combining this book's information with the appropriate Encounter Table for whatever region you're playing in (see the *Deadlands Marshal's Handbook*) also provides novel adventure ideas.

We also provide a Strange Locale Generator for creating settlement-based adventures on the fly, each with its fair share of secrets, evil, and dramatic complications. That nifty system starts on page 94.

Reading the Entries

For each of the Ghost Towns herein, we begin by giving you a general introduction to the place and its peculiar history. Then we get to **The City Now**, which lays out the burg's current fortunes. This section starts by listing the town's default Region and Fear



Level. (Additionally, a Price Modifier is listed for Rulamer, but you can ignore it if you're not using *Deadlands: The Flood*.) Although each place is designed for a region, it can be located nearly anywhere inside it, or moved to another region entirely with minor modifications.

A sidebar lists each town's **Points of Interest**, all of which are shown on the accompanying maps. You'll notice we don't provide you with maps of any building interiors, Marshal. This allows you to use your own tabletop terrain, map tiles, or a sketch on a piece of notebook paper to represent the structures.

Next is a section called **The Locals**, where the town's movers and shakers

are described for your edification. Some of these rate only a modified stat-block, in which case the Marshal is directed to the appropriate listing in the *Deadlands Marshal's Handbook* and told how to alter it. The true Big Bugs get stat-blocks of their own; you can find them in the last chapter.

Under **Talk o' the Town** we spill the beans on the Savage Tales, encounters, and random plot threads a gang of compadres might run up against. Some are full-blown Savage Tales, and others are story seeds of varying length and complexity.

Without further ado, Marshal, let's begin this-a-here tour of the wild, weird yonder!

Devil's Backbone

Originally known as Grayson Flats, Devil's Backbone has seen its nickname eclipse its proper one. Thrust from its home on the desert floor by the Great Quake, it now sits on an isolated plateau. A singular long, narrow, twisting trail—"Crooked as the Devil's backbone," the saying goes—is the only way in or out of the city, unless one is willing to climb treacherous cliffs. Considering the trail rises nearly 1,000 feet from the bottom to the city entrance, that's no mean feat.

Grayson Flats wasn't located within the radius of the quake that ruined California, but it was affected anyway. A powerful aftershock sent the city much higher than the area around it. Though a great deal of the city was damaged or destroyed outright, the town center remained intact. By some miracle or curse, most of the population survived the upheaval.

Soon after the townsfolk recovered from the initial shock, they discovered vast reserves of ghost rock under their feet. Many resolved to stay, thinking they'd all be rich if they mined the rock and carted it away from here. Others saw no future in it and loaded up their families and belongings in a minor exodus. These folks had a hard time of it on the trail, for the most part. Harried by horrifically large spiders, a few stumbled off the trail's edge and suffered lethal drops. One or two suffered bouts of debilitating vertigo, brought on by the sickening heights and paralyzing Fear.

When the stalwart survivors reached the bottom of the Crooked Trail, they were greeted by the notorious bandit Emmett "Black Heart" Hartley (as recounted in the

Tombstone Epitaph on page 3) behind his makeshift stockade. His operation is far better funded now. Watchtowers flank the stockade walls, which are equipped with a Gatling gun or two and manned by a score of desperate outlaws.

The rumors of powerful backers are true as well: The Greater Maze Rock Miners' Association—or "Rockies" in common parlance—supplies Hartley with supplies and materiel, hoping to claim the riches of Devil's Backbone for their own. Hartley, for his part, has promised the mining cartel no ghost rock will leave the mesa—as long as he and his men are well-supplied with food, whiskey, and women. So far everyone's kept their end of the bargain.

THE CITY NOW

Region: California

Fear Level: 4

Devil's Backbone is home to less than 200 terrified people and covers only several hundred feet in a rough oval pattern that ends at the cliffs. A good majority of the population is here because they're hell-bent on pulling all the ghost rock out of the mesa they can, or they're just determined to get their piece of the pie. But a good many families are just plain trapped, uninterested in mining and unable to negotiate the treacherous trail or avoid the bandits' fort. Besides geography, pretty much the only thing they all have in common is fear.

Most of the buildings near the town's edge are dangerous, teetering piles of

Devil's Backbone



1. Crooked Trailhead
2. Fehler's Workshop
3. Flat Top Saloon
4. Halpin General Supply
5. Mayor Hennessee's House
6. Stairs to Nowhere

rubble, having been torn apart when the city was expelled from the desert floor. Every so often, falling rubble endangers—or ends—the life of a miner dangling below on his bosun's chair. Some of the more dangerous spots had crude barricades erected, but over time these were scavenged for raw materials. Most buildings have been gutted for anything useful in trying to leave town, leaving less than a few dozen houses intact.

Raw materials for what? Glad you asked, amigo. Half the citizens are working on a massive construction: a wooden staircase extending from the city to the desert floor. This project is likely to leave Devil's Backbone a ghost town once completed—one way or another. The optimists believe they'll finally have their escape route. Critics of the plan point out that the bandits are likely to notice the stairs long before they reach ground, and prepare appropriately. That is, if the rickety staircase doesn't flat-out

collapse and dash everyone onto the rocks far below.

Currently, the steps reach down about 400 feet, where progress has stalled due to lack of wood. On moonlit, Fear-fueled nights the so-called "Stairs to Nowheres" take on the vague aspect of a skeletal arm with its hand chopped clean off, reaching down into an abyss of darkness.

All that said, food and other supplies come in sporadically. Adding these to the staple "prairie dog stew" and carefully rationed vegetables from the mayor's garden, the townsfolk are able to survive—but only just.

Travelin' the Crooked Trail

Getting to and from Devil's Backbone isn't easy, but folks do it more often than the *Tombstone Epitaph's* pages would imply. The trail's not really so treacherous only a mountain climber would attempt it, but it's no wonder folks believe that given the amount of accidents suffered

POINTS OF INTEREST

Here are some of the best-known, biggest, and most popular places in Devil's Backbone, as shown on the nearby map.

Crooked Trailhead: Here's the spot where the Crooked Trail reaches Devil's Backbone. Even from here, one can see the tempting nuggets of sparkling ghost rock strewn all along the trail's length.

Fehler's Workshop: John Fehler works tirelessly to discover an escape from the mesa. Constant banging and clanking issue from within, with thick black smoke puffing from the forge's chimney.

Flat Top Saloon: This wide, squat building seems to exemplify its name with a flat, slightly sloped roof. Owned and operated by Marshal Jane Carol, who uses the saloon for her legal duties too.

Halpin General Supply: The shelves of Owen Halpin's shop are ostensibly bare, but his secret storeroom is chock full of hoarded food and supplies.

Mayor Hennessee's House: Mayor Hennessee donated half his house to John Fehler's staircase-building project, so what remains isn't in very good repair.

Ruins: The remains of buildings demolished to fuel the staircase project. Now they provide shelter for prairie dogs and sometimes worse things, like terrantula swarms (see the *Deadlands Marshal's Handbook*).

Stairs to Nowhere: John Fehler's infamous, unfinished staircase. An Agility roll is required to safely negotiate its length. On a failure, the cowpoke slips and falls if she fails a second Agility roll (at -2) to catch hold. On snake eyes, the entire staircase breaks off and plunges to the desert floor, hundreds of feet below. We'd refer you to the Falling rules in *Savage Worlds*, Marshal, but it probably won't help your poor heroes avoid that sudden, fatal stop.

by travelers. Bouts of vertigo—brought on by the dizzying height, anxiety, and bad mojo from the enormous quantities of ghost rock nestled above—are fairly common.

Make a Spirit roll each time a character makes the trip. With success, a hero isn't troubled whatsoever for the rest of the current trek up or down the trail. Failure on the roll means a hero becomes dizzy and discombobulated from the lofty heights.

This is similar to being Shaken, in that the poor sod can only perform free actions. But the character *must* move her Pace each round in a random direction. To determine exactly which way the lone cowpoke goes, have the player roll a d12 and read it like a clock face. As long as there's a friendly hand to guide her, the hero doesn't suffer much more than inconvenience.

At the narrower parts of the trail (only 2–4" wide on a battlemat), suffering vertigo alone becomes downright deadly. A character that walks off the edge plunges to the desert floor far below (a fall that inflicts maximum damage along most of the trail's length; see Falling in *Savage Worlds*). Watch your step, amigos!

Each round (before moving their Pace), make a Spirit roll (-2) for each traveler suffering vertigo. Success means the stalwart compadre recovers, and can act normally for the rest of the journey. A Fate Chip can be spent at any time to shrug off the vertigo's effects for the remainder of the current trip.

If snake eyes come up on any Spirit roll to avoid or recover from vertigo, the cowpoke gains a permanent Minor Phobia (Heights) Hindrance.

Fort Bandito

Crouched at the base of the Crooked Trail like some ramshackle beast is a crude stockade fort. Officially the

place has no name, but passers-by have dubbed it "Fort Bandito" by virtue of its custodian and commander, a no-good son of a bitch by the name of "Black Heart" Hartley.

His bandits man the small fort's walls and skulk all around the base of Devil's Backbone mesa, waiting for folk to pass by. Most are charged a toll—totaling everything a body's got, naturally—and sent on their way. Troublemakers and sass-talkers are shot full of lead and dropped into a shallow grave.

Hartley's Boys also ride along the sides of the trail, enjoying the relative safety of the desert floor, searching for the remains of folks who took a bad step from the heights. Even with the advantage of a fort and Gatling guns, these craven cowards prefer looting the dead to a fight any day.

- **Hartley's Boys (20):** Use Outlaw stats in the *Deadlands Marshal's Handbook*. (We spill the beans on their leader, Emmett "Black Heart" Hartley, on page 122.) They wield a variety of weapons, but two man the stockade's Gatling guns (**Range:** 24/48/96, **Damage:** 2d8, RoF 3, **Shots** 100, **AP** 2).

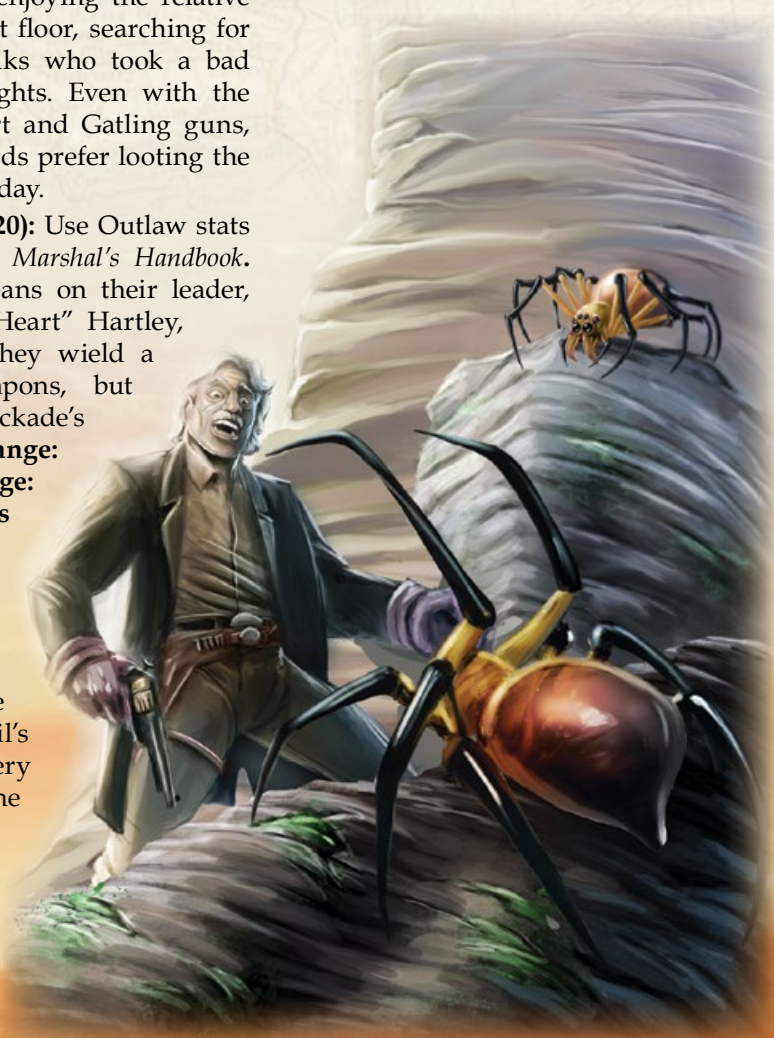
Critters a-Lurkin'

Criminals aren't the only obstacle on the path to Devil's Backbone. Ornerly critters lurk on the desert floor and along the trail in search of easy meals. A desert thing has taken to the area,

feasting on bandits and their horses more often than not. Weird, coyote-sized spiders also lurk in the region.

Draw for encounters as usual (per the *Deadlands Marshal's Handbook*), with an encounter on the desert floor indicating a hungry desert thing, and a trail encounter indicating terrantulas instead.

- **Desert Thing (1):** See the *Deadlands Marshal's Handbook*.
- **Terrantulas (1 per hero):** See Terrantula (Large) in the *Deadlands Marshal's Handbook*.



THE LOCALS

After a cowpoke arrives in Devil's Backbone, his or her first concern is likely getting a stiff drink, a bath, and maybe a room. Plenty of intrigue and stories lurk in Devil's Backbone for those who look, and it doesn't take a genius to see the town seems somewhat unnatural.

The townsfolk in Devil's Backbone have become plenty embittered over time. After all, even if the majority of those left are able to get at all that ghost rock, they're so isolated from the rest of the world they'd never be able to sell it. Worse yet, long periods of inadequate food and supplies have taken their toll, diminishing the townsfolk's numbers and weakening them mentally and physically.

On the political front, they're torn between the optimistic John Fehler and the pragmatic Owen Halpin as to the wisest course of action—to stay and mine all they can, or focus on finding a way out besides the Crooked Trail. Though Halpin has a ready supply of what folks need, what seems like profiteering doesn't sit well with many. On the other hand, Fehler's critics have a point when they mention the many crackpot failures that complement the scientist's unflagging optimism.

The locals cling desperately to any newcomers that make it into town, eager for word of the world outside. They listen most intently for news of "Fort Bandito," and whether the hated brigands are still dug in. There are few heroes here; the local marshal was lost not too long ago, and the town has never bothered to replace him. After all, it seems pointless to lock someone up when they're all trapped on top of a plateau anyway. Those who take a stand soon find they have a following.

Some of the most notable people in and around town are:

Emmett "Black Heart" Hartley

Emmett Hartley was a shiftless bum before the Great Quake. Now he's one of the most feared men in the area of Devil's Backbone. His oily black hair is long and unkempt, drooping down as far as his mustache. He leads a crew of bandits with an iron fist that belies his thin build and stature. Most follow him out of fear, others because Hartley always seems to know how to avoid weird critters and other hazards.

Together, they take every opportunity to rob, murder, and otherwise harass anyone left vulnerable by the effects of the ghost rock lining the trail to the city—under the guise of a "toll." Rarely does a mail carrier get into town, and never does Hartley allow one to make it out again. "Black Heart" is well on his way to becoming a Fearmonger, as his efforts have kept the city cut off from the world around it and in constant dread.

Hartley never runs alone; he always has a good number of bully boys to back him up. Although none of them are as experienced as Hartley (he kills the ones that get too good), they can handle themselves in a fight. He has other allies, too—the Rockies provide him with men and materiel in return for his efforts in keeping Devil's Backbone isolated. Their hope is that a rock-bottom offer will eventually be sufficient to snap up the entire town.

• **Emmett "Black Heart" Hartley:**
See page 122.

Hubert Lavigne

Hubert Lavigne is a recent addition to the town of Devil's Backbone. Always seen wearing a well-kept (if starting to show some wear) suit, he keeps his dark hair trim and his face clean-shaven. He watches the trail closely, rarely speaking, seemingly waiting for something or someone. He brushes off most attempts at conversation, only interjecting when it

looks like Owen Halpin's going to get one over on John Fehler.

Lavigne is actually an Agent, dispatched with a partner, Hedley Kramer, to bring in Hartley and prove the collusion of the Greater Maze Rock Miners' Association with the notorious outlaw. Forced up the trail after being robbed by Hartley's Boys, Lavigne was the only one to make it to the city. A misfire on Kramer's Mnemomizer—dropped as he became dizzy—caused Agent Lavigne to forget his partner's fatal plunge, so he waits for Kramer to appear.

Lavigne is eager to get back down to the desert floor and about his business. He seeks to partner with a posse whose morals and allegiance he shares. Agent Lavigne knows full well that both Hartley and Owen Halpin (see below) are working with the Rockies, but he has no proof. If the Rockies could be rebuffed, the Union might be able to claim Devil's Backbone's riches.

Hubert Lavigne: Use Agent stats in the *Deadlands Marshal's Handbook*.

Jane Carol

Jane's actually the owner of the Flat Top Saloon, although fortune has thrown her into the role of the local peacekeeper. Marshal Jane found she's a decent hand at it, but mainly as she's the *only* hand, the town's previous marshal having taken a swan dive off the trail nearly half a year ago.

The majority of the respect she receives is because she's an expert cook, able to stretch simple ingredients into palatable soups and stews to last days. Just like in *Lost Angels*, you don't want to anger the person who's providing the food.

Marshal Jane (as she's known around town) is moderately attractive, but Devil's Backbone has aged her beyond her years. She keeps her graying, brunette hair cropped short—after all, soap isn't easy to come by. Kind-hearted, Jane is generous and soft, able to disarm many a hostile situation with a soothing word. She often acts as a mediator between Fehler and Halpin—and any posse that lands in the city.

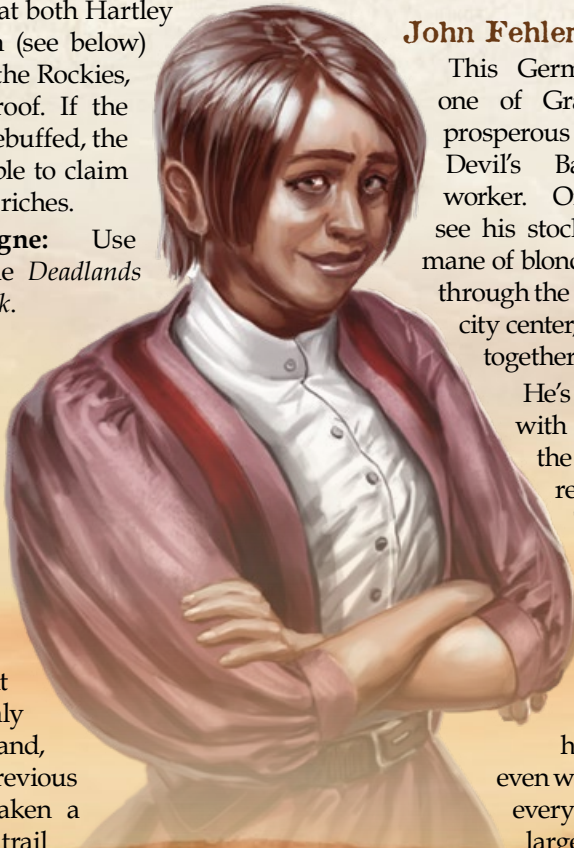
- **Jane Carol:** Use Townsfolk stats in the *Deadlands Marshal's Handbook*.

John Fehler

This German engineer was one of Grayson Flats' most prosperous citizens. Now he's Devil's Backbone's hardest worker. One can normally see his stocky build and thick mane of blond hair laboring long through the day and night in the city center, putting something together or taking it apart.

He's been consumed with getting down to the desert floor, despite repeated failures.

The attempt at an elevator? Not enough rope. The trackless railroad car? No one to drive it. Now the staircase project has halted, because even with scrapping nearly everything in town—and large parts of the town itself—John ran out of wood with over 500 feet to go.



FEHLER'S RAIL CAR

Acc/Top Speed: 10/20; **Toughness:** 8 (2); **Crew:** 2+4; **Notes:** Driving -2 in rough conditions; travels approximately one round-trip down the trail and back per pound of ghost rock.

Malfunction: Rolling a 1 on a Driving die (regardless of the Wild Die) causes the ghost rock boiler to explode, blasting everyone in a Large Burst Template (including those aboard, and the vehicle itself) for 3d10 damage.

Due to the substandard materials used, when a Club is drawn the rail car suddenly ejects its boiler, springs a steam leak, blows a gasket, or suffers some other minor malfunction that causes the entire rig to stop functioning. This means someone needs to leave the protection of the car for 2d6 rounds to repair it (subjecting them to the effects of exposure on the trail—and terrantulas!).

In spite of the failures, Fehler retains a rather optimistic outlook, determined to lick this problem no matter the cost. His wild ideas of a *wunderwaffe*—a “wonder weapon”—ignite hope in a number of the townsfolk who help him whenever they can. Every night he prays for inspiration and every night he receives it, as a sneaky manitou whispers to him as he sleeps. After all, the more divided the town remains, the more conflict there is to feed the Reckoners.

John Fehler: Use Mad Scientist stats from *Deadlands Marshal's Handbook*, with the addition of the Strong Willed Edge.

MAYOR HENNESSEE

Jedediah Hennessee wasn't always the mayor. At first he was a simple cook at the town's only saloon, the Flat Top, and not much of a prospect beyond that, possessed of a slightly pudgy frame and black hair going prematurely bald. However, Hennessee has a strong and abiding faith, one that has turned him into a leader over time. Those that remain in town flock to him as their shepherd.

He lacks the confidence to do major miracles, but he's kept the town in water, clear of disease, and free of walkin' dead, which led to his eventual appointment to mayor. Soft spoken, his confidence has begun to waver in recent months. Hennessee has a nagging feeling that God's patience must be wearing thin from his frequent entreaties. Although he still maintains the garden he grew for cooking ingredients, he dreads the not-too-distant day the last vegetable is harvested.

Mayor Hennessee: Use Blessed stats in the *Deadlands Marshal's Handbook*, but he lacks the Champion Edge and has the Knack (Born on Christmas) Edge instead.

OWEN HALPIN

Unlike many of the townsfolk, Owen initially was quite content to keep the status quo. Whereas other residents' appearances

have started to reflect the feast-or-famine nature of the food supply, Owen retains a sheen of health. A conniver of the highest caliber, when Devil's Backbone became isolated he set himself up as a trader—with an agent of the Rockies. This allows him to bring in food despite Fort Bandito's presence, which in turn allows the mining to continue (for what the Rockies believe is a cheaper price than hiring laborers!).

A charismatic speaker, he's begun to amass a number of supporters for keeping things the way they are. He's found himself on the wrong end of arguments with John Fehler, as the German feels the growing stockpile in Owen's house could help the effort to leave Devil's Backbone more than it can help them stay.

Owen's also a landlord, owning several of the properties where his supporters stay. He now has quite a hoard of their possessions, taken in lieu of rent. Owen feels that he shouldn't have to give anything up without getting something in return. It would take a lot for him to allow Fehler to root through his valuables to scavenge for supplies.

- **Owen Halpin: Use Townsfolk stats in the *Deadlands Marshal's Handbook*, adding Persuasion d8, the Snakeoil Salesman and Charismatic Edges, and the Greedy (Major) Hindrance.**

TALK O' THE TOWN

A number of opportunities for twisted tales hide within Devil's Backbone. Here are a few tales to get you started, Marshal.

BUSTIN' LOOSE

Location: Devil's Backbone (Fear Level 4)

No matter what sorts of trouble the posse gets into in Devil's Backbone, sooner or later they're going to try to get

out again. Run this Savage Tale when the exodus occurs.

You can make this as simple or complex as you want to suit your game. To give the posse a sense of the frustration the people here have endured, you might put persistent cowpokes through multiple failing scenarios before they hit upon a workable idea. You should reward a posse's creativity in any case, Marshal.

The Blind Leading the...Um, Who?

Cowpokes taking the time to consider the situation might reason that a large enough group should be able to simply walk the path out of town. So long as most folks remain free of the vertigo's effects and herd everyone along a safe path, this could work. Even then, getting down the trail only means they're alive to face Hartley and his crew.

Most of the townspeople sternly oppose this approach, both Fehler and Halpin's supporters agreeing that it amounts to suicide. They've seen a number of folk try, and they always either fall off the side and perish, end up back in town with all their possessions stolen, or simply vanish—most likely killed by Hartley himself.

An alternate way into this scenario arises from the posse's mere presence in town. A group of strangers trying to find a way out is enough to set off some tempers, as people lash out rather than get their hopes up again. In this case, Halpin and his supporters show up—on behalf of the Rockies—to toss the posse out of town, forcing them to head down the trail they way they came.

Driven to Death

John Fehler's designs are brilliant, but he lacks resources to complete them. Those with experience in the New Science could review or adapt some of John's inventions, with the trackless railroad car seeming

like the best idea. A mad scientist could knock the six-person vehicle into working order without much trouble, and there's certainly enough ghost rock around to power it. Repairing Fehler's rail car requires 2d6 days' work and a successful Weird Science roll at -2 (assistants can use Repair to aid in a Cooperative Roll).

The rail car isn't built to be a weapon; it's not rugged enough to withstand a prolonged assault. A few rounds are all it would really take for a determined group of attackers to pull it apart or blow it up. Also, given that the only people capable of driving the thing would be one of the posse alongside John Fehler, it's likely to need several trips to ferry all Fehler's supporters down the side.

Ferrying passengers out of town is a Dramatic Task (see *Savage Worlds*). For each of the five actions, the rail car driver draws an action card and makes a Driving roll (-2). Only the co-pilot can aid the driver in Cooperative Rolls. See the sidebar on **Fehler's Rail Car** for additional complications.

Stockade Gates

Regardless of how the posse eventually gets out there's still trouble waiting for them below, in the form of Fort Bandito. Seeing the posse come out again leads Hartley to believe they still have most of their valuables, something he intends to rectify. He's no fool, though, so he rouses his men as soon as he sees the posse get halfway down the Crooked Trail.

Hartley recently intercepted a package of captured rattler young 'uns (and everything else the wagon had on it) being sent Back East for study. Realizing what he has, he unseals the package and drops it at the base of the trail just before the posse gets to the bottom. As the posse approaches, the voraciously hungry pack attacks. Once the posse are enmeshed

fighting the young 'uns, Hartley's men on the stockade walls open fire.

Hartley watches the fight from inside the fort's gate, swooping in on horseback if the posse seems nearly defeated, but pulling back before getting in any real danger.

- **Rattler Young 'Uns (1 per hero):** See the *Deadlands Marshal's Handbook*.
- **Hartley's Boys (2 per hero):** Use Outlaw stats in the *Deadlands Marshal's Handbook*.
- **Emmett "Black Heart" Hartley:** See page 122.

Aftermath

If Agent Lavigne is with the group, the sight of Hartley reawakens his memories, leading him after the villain. Hartley has no intention of being captured, but is willing to be taken alive rather than dead. Inside a safe in the fort are documents proving the Rockies' involvement in Hartley's activities, along with a small fortune of \$5,223.

For helping capture Hartley and blowing the Rockies' activities wide-open, Lavigne offers the posse a share in the reward (\$1,000 total) and a good word with his Agency bosses.

LET'S MAKE A DEAL

Location: Devil's Backbone (Fear Level 4)

While poking around town, the posse stumbles upon one of Fehler and Halpin's frequent arguments, moderated by Mayor Hennessee, and surrounded by a crowd that's growing rowdy in support of their favorites.

With a faint German accent, John Fehler shouts,

We've been over this again and again, Mr. Halpin! Your cache of goods holds a number of items that could make my projects significantly more feasible—hammers and nails chief among them. Yet you steadfastly refuse to make life easier on these people. Infuriating!

Completely frustrated, Fehler turns to the posse and says,

You haven't been here long enough to be tired of this. You argue some sense into him!

The Great Debate

Use the Social Conflict rules in *Savage Worlds* if any smooth-talking buckaroos want to get involved. Owen Halpin's argument opens with his insistence on his legal right as a business owner to set his own prices, turns in the second round to his own efforts to keep the townsfolk alive by clever "rationing" strategies, and concludes by underlining the fact that many of Fehler's "escape plans" are, in reality, crackpot flights of fancy.

Halpin's no fool and won't be easily swayed unless something truly valuable is on the line. Furthermore, he fears losing face in front of his supporters, so he drives as hard a bargain as possible.

If Halpin wins the debate (or it ends in a tie), he walks off sneering and takes his supporters with him. If the posse wants to help Fehler now, they need to devise some other way of parting the miser from his hardware.

Assuming the posse can rustle up five or more successes on Persuasion rolls, Halpin caves and offers whatever Fehler needs, just to save face. With a margin of victory of three or four successes, Halpin grudgingly agrees to help, but demands enough valuables to make it worth his while—at least \$100 worth of goods. In the case of only one or two successes, Halpin offers the minimum support necessary and demands no less than \$250 worth of goods in return.

- **Owen Halpin:** Use Townsfolk stats in the *Deadlands Marshal's Handbook*, adding Persuasion d8, the Snakeoil Salesman and Charismatic Edges, and the Greedy (Major) Hindrance.

Halpin's Hoard

If they're victorious, Halpin takes Fehler and the posse to the center of town. He unlocks his shop, leading the group into the back area where he keeps "the good stuff." Once inside Halpin's trove, virtually anything the posse or Fehler needs can be found (excepting improbably large amounts of wood, an armory's worth of ammunition or shootin' irons, Smith & Robards devices, or the like—use your best judgment, Marshal).

Read the following:

Fehler seethes with rage. He shouts, "They've been in here all along?!" Grabbing some hammers and nails, he storms back to his work.

Meanwhile, Halpin keeps trying to make deals with the cowpokes, hoping he has something they need—something worth ghost rock. Halpin acquired Kramer's Mnemomizer and sussed out how to make it work. Acquiring ghost rock would benefit him greatly, as he could "suggest" people give him their belongings instead of having to haggle for them.

Shrewd characters—or those experienced with the Agency—should get a Notice roll to see the device sitting on a shelf labeled "Not For Trade" alongside a few other personal items of "purely sentimental value"—the Mnemomizer.

Halpin's innate greed means that if they do provide him with some ghost rock, he gleefully starts using the device on the townsfolk and the posse. In a very short time the posse has to deal with a gluttonous savage they've created—who may now have all their weapons locked up in his cache...

Grant's Pass (Xin-Huihuang)

Grant's Pass was initially a medium-sized city filled with middle management and security forces of Union Blue Railroad. Built in the Disputed Territories, the town was founded to provide support for a Union Blue attempt to enter the Sioux Nations from the South. This attracted the ire of Iron Dragon's Warlord Kang, who sent a young samurai named Yüan Cai to eliminate the problem. Yüan Cai set off with 20 men to Grant's Pass, visions of glory and victory inflaming their passions.

It was a rough ride to Grant's Pass through the Disputed Lands. Only 12 of the original 20 made it to their destination with Cai. Grant's Pass had stockade walls and a gate to defend against the Sioux, complicating the task set before Warlord Kang's servants. The rail warriors set about their task, using dynamite to sever rail lines leading into the city and destroying a camp of workers laying track just before dark.

Cai and his men knew with their depleted numbers there would be little chance of surviving a charge against the city's gates, but were resigned to their duty. After mentally preparing themselves to die most honorably in the completion of their task, they set off. When they arrived to raze the city at dusk, things took a turn for the unexpected—the Battle of Grant's Pass was in full swing.

As Cai and his men rode into Grant's Pass, they found the gates open, the city

already embroiled in a fight for its life. Seems Black River's Mina Devlin also knew of the attempt to start a Union Blue rail line into the Sioux Nations and decided to sabotage it. She sent in a few of her witches to raise a horde of walkin' dead, hoping the attack would appear to be a Bayou Vermilion assault.

Cai and his men found themselves fighting for their lives alongside what was left of the Union Blue security in a battle that lasted 'til dawn. When the smoke cleared only a handful of Union Blue security were left, but the people of the new settlement looked on Cai and his men as heroes.

Reflecting on his hardships encountered on the path to Grant's Pass, Cai decided that destiny had played him a new hand. He convinced his men to defect with him and settle the north outskirts of the town, which they decided to call "Xin Huihuang."

THE CITY NOW

Region: Disputed Territories

Fear Level: 2

Grant's Pass—inclusive of Xin Huihuang—is a city of duality. The original tenants call it Grant's Pass, and much of that original town is still intact. The southern portion of the city is widely spaced, with lots of open areas and greenery. Union loyalty runs strong

1. Law Office
2. Pony Express Station
3. Rail Depot
4. Rusted Spike Saloon
5. Yüan Cai's House

Grant's Pass & Xin Huihuang

among the residents, but loyalty to their home swells even larger in their chests. Even though the idea of becoming a Union Blue station long ago perished—the main Wasatch line cutting off Union Blue access pretty much put a stop to it—people have staked their claims and aren't budging. Families now live here and the city is gaining a reputation as a "safe haven" on travels to the West. Furthermore, the Pony Express uses it as a way station on their delivery runs.

The northern part of the city, Xin Huihuang, has become a refuge for Chinese immigrants. In some places Xin Huihuang is a near-mythical destination for oppressed Chinese railroad workers. Deserters from the major rail companies frequently have this city as their destination.

Xin Huihuang continues to grow by leaps and bounds, more and more resembling a crowded Chinese city. Homes and shops are stacked on top of

each other and climbing up the sides of the pass, even now crowding against the southern half of the city.

Unfortunately, not all the refugees seeking shelter are virtuous. A growing number come from the various California Triads, hoping to start their own inland operations. Opium dens, once unheard of here, have begun to operate clandestinely. The south gate into the city still stands in its original form, while the north gate was pushed out to make room for the new folk. As the city grows crowded, tensions build as tempers flare and mistrust festers. Whereas the original residents lived side by side, these new citizens have begun regarding each other with suspicion.

It's been several years since Cai came to town, and in that time, he's set himself up as a reluctant, untitled leader. His name alone can settle most arguments, as he often takes a direct hand in enforcing the peace on both sides of town. Recently,

POINTS OF INTEREST

Here are some notable places in Grant's Pass and Xin Huihuang, as shown on the nearby map.

Law Office: From this base of operations and place of incarceration, Simon Colin maintains the peace.

Pony Express Station: Here Johnny Gomes oversees the Pony Express riders constantly coming in and out. He's got a finger on the pulse of news round these parts—because he's a spy for Kang!

Rail Depot: Though the tracks still don't go anywhere except south, hopes for a link-up with Union Blue abide in many of the townsfolk's hearts.

Rusted Spike Saloon: A popular watering hole and meeting place among local miners and former railroad workers.

Yüan Cai's House: A large residence constructed in traditional Chinese style, walled and well-guarded against intrusion, serves as home to the great hero (and to some, villain) of Grant's Pass, Yüan Cai. The place sits roughly at the center of the north part of town, Xin Huihuang.

though, the residents seem to have forgotten the city's origin, so Cai's grasp on the town has diminished. Some of his founding men now actively work for their own interests, hoping to turn this peaceful village into their own personal empire.

Warlord Kang hasn't forgotten the betrayal of Cai, nor has Mina Devlin forgiven Cai's spoiling of her plans. Both have planted agents in the city after numerous direct assaults failed, hoping to subvert it at the root. Even Union Blue, having lost the grand race known as the first Great Rail War, is reevaluating whether it should attempt a return to Grant's Pass—perhaps a subterranean one, taking a page from Hellstromme's book—to start work on the railhead again. This town's several-year history of peaceful coexistence threatens to shatter any day now, something the Sioux are keenly observing.

The Locals

The people of the dual city of Grant's Pass (Xin Huihuang) are as varied and diverse as the town itself. Although the town seems to have a split personality, most folk roam from the northern to the southern parts of the city, and back again, with no concerns.

A number are willing members of the city militia under Simon Colin, as the siege mentality engendered by living so near Indian Lands builds a strong bond among the residents. It's that very sense of community that has kept the city together despite the machinations of the Rail Barons.

Here are a few of the city's leading lights:

Anna Quaini

Anna Quaini is a thick woman with a pompous air. She is often seen around the south side of town (never the north, heaven forbid!) dressing someone down for "improper" activity.



Highest on her personal list of sins is mixing with “those people,” although she won’t say directly who “those people” are. She’s a rabble-rouser capable of swaying people with her brute force of will—or simply brute force. She’s most recently been seen objecting to the fact that there’s no “good, proper marshal” to keep Grant’s Pass in line. Simon writes off her tantrums to her having “an Italian temper,” a statement that visibly angers her if she overhears it.

Of course, all this bluster is a cover. Anna is a plant for Mina Devlin, who hasn’t forgiven the slight against her by Cai. Mina sent one of her best witches to Grant’s Pass to help fracture the populace. The hope is that once the people turn on each other, Anna will be in position to burn down the town in front of Cai.

Anna hitches on to any opportunity to sow dissent. She’s openly sympathetic to

visitors who end up on the wrong side of Simon’s suspicions.

- **Anna Quaini:** Use Cult Leader stats in the *Deadlands Marshal’s Handbook*. Tack on Intimidation d8, Taunt d8, the Strong Willed Edge, and the *bolt*, *deflection*, and *fly* powers. (We did say she’s one of Mina’s best, after all.)

Johnny Gomes

As manager of the local Pony Express “Home Station,” Gomes is either found delivering the newest packages, or tending to horses waiting for their turn to run.

At first glance, Gomes looks like a more down-to-earth version of Simon Colin. Dressed simply, Gomes has garnered quite a bit of trust and loyalty in the southern side of town as a fair and practical arbiter of disputes. He always has a kind word for everyone, even cantankerous locals like Anna.

Being such a likable sort, no one suspects Johnny of being a spy for Warlord Kang—but that’s exactly what he is. Seeing everything that goes in or out of the city allows him access to privileged information. It also makes it unlikely for anyone to see the messages Johnny gets from Kang, leaving people unsuspecting of his loyalties. At the same time, Johnny’s not above using his position to make sure something gets “lost” if doing so would strengthen the city.

Lately, though, messages from Kang have been few, far between, and less inquisitive. Gomes is a little jumpy out of fear Kang is planning a massive retribution, and has left Gomes out of the loop.

- **Johnny Gomes:** Use Townsfolk stats in the *Deadlands Marshal’s Handbook*, but add the Charismatic Edge.

Kangi Yuhamani, “Crow Carries Walker”

Kangi Yuhamani is living proof that the Sioux have not forgotten about this city, built near territory the *wicasas* claim as their own. Attempts to take the city by force have failed for the Sioux as much as for Kang or Devlin (although Indians can claim partial credit for a few of those, as the Sioux unwittingly attacked groups headed to wreak vengeance on Grant’s Pass).

Crow Carries Walker is a proud young brave with a clever plan. Having infiltrated the city, he stays in the northern part of town, using the white man’s ignorance to conceal himself amongst the Chinese. Although most of the Chinese residents have spotted him, they pay him little attention. This allows him to spy on the movements of the entire city, reporting back to his allies when he can.

But Crow isn’t just a Sioux, he’s also a Ravenite. Living in the city gives him significant opportunity to acquire the white man’s weapons without the *wicasas* catching on to the source. Even more

shrewdly, he’s apprenticed to a Chinese gunsmith near the center of town. Not only is he learning how to make the very weapons he wants to supply to other Ravenites, he often gets a chance to handle (or acquire) some of the more powerful weapons that make their way into town.

Lately Crow has taken to getting travel information from visitors to feed back to a waiting raiding group. Together they haven’t been preventing people from entering the city, but they make it very difficult to leave.

- **Kangi Yuhamani:** Use Indian Brave (Veteran) stats in the *Deadlands Marshal’s Handbook*. Add Climbing d6, Lockpicking d6, and the Thief Edge, and replace the Old Ways Oath with the Vow (Serve the Order of the Raven) Hindrance.

Liwei Jin

Jin is one of Cai’s men who remained standing after the walkin’ dead ravaged Grant’s Pass. But Jin no longer considers himself one of “Cai’s men,” instead professing loyalty to himself and his patients. Taking a vow of pacifism, he has left behind his previous life, devoted only to the present.

He’s uncharacteristically tall for someone of Chinese descent. Combined with a brawny build, he cuts quite an intimidating figure. He is also the best doctor in the city, combining influences from multiple cultures to care for his patients. Even the outspoken Anna Quaini has been known to begrudgingly turn to Jin in times of need.

A devout Taoist, Jin often shares his beliefs with patients. He rambles on about how the Jade Emperor formed humans out of clay, leaving them to bake in the sun. Rain caused some of the clay men to become misshapen, thereby allowing sickness and abnormality to enter. Jin keeps a respectable number of shrines in a cellar beneath his office, showcasing many of the departments

of Heaven. Show enough interest in his stories, and he may even let a cowpoke see a few of the more interesting ones.

He's begun to suspect a few things about the townsfolk, namely Yuhamani and Quaini. If he were to speak out about his feelings, he'd likely be instrumental in uncovering one of the many plots to ruin Grant's Pass. For now he keeps silent, shrewdly observing the ever-growing town, while his sword and traditional armor gather dust.

- **Liwei Jin:** Use Rail Warrior (Iron Dragon) stats in the *Deadlands Marshal's Handbook*, but add Healing d8, the Brawny Edge (for a Toughness of 7), and replace Mean with the Pacifist (Major) Hindrance.

Simon Colin

Simon Colin was one of the few Union Blue security men to survive the Battle of Grant's Pass. Now he's Cai's right-hand man, acting in what could easily be seen as a marshal's role as the head of the city militia. Between the two of them they've managed to keep the peace for the past few years. Cai may be well-known for his unrivaled hand-to-hand fighting ability, but Simon Colin is unmatched with a shooting iron 'round these parts.

A tall, lanky man, Colin looks every bit the British gentleman his great-grandfathers were, right down to his well-waxed moustache. He's polite, well-mannered, and will fill you full of lead (with an apology) for breaking the peace or attacking the city. Colin is so loyal to Cai, one might think he came with him to Grant's Pass.

Simon's diplomatic nature has smoothed out a number of squabbles, but recent tensions have seen him sometimes ignored. A lawman that feels impotent is not a pretty sight, so he's been harder than he should be on visitors—suspecting fomenters of revolt in every saddle. Sadly,

he's not too far from the truth, as agents of discord lie in wait hoping to destabilize the fragile peace.

- **Simon Colin:** Use Gunman (Veteran) stats in the *Deadlands Marshal's Handbook*.

Yüan Cai

Cai has undergone a spiritual transformation since his arrival at Grant's Pass. No longer the young man he was when he settled here, he keeps himself in fighting form. But he's grown a palpable presence that extends beyond his athletic, five-foot-eight-inch frame. When he decided to settle down, he had a vision that rivaled Warlord Kang's, though more pure. His dream of a home where people of many races worked and lived cooperatively turned him from the path of thug to that of leader.

The troubles of recent years have taken their toll on Cai. He is plagued by the sad realization that the early years of Xin Huihuang may have been its glory years, his dream of peace already spiraling into a decline as people begin to distrust each other. Adding to his stress is the constant paranoia generated from fending off plots from agents of the Rail Barons and occasional attacks from the Sioux. Less virtuous men would have become embittered, but Cai still holds out hope he can turn things around.

- **Yuan Cai:** Use Martial Artist (Superior) stats in the *Deadlands Marshal's Handbook*, but add the Celestial Kung Fu (Eagle Claw) and Celestial Kung Fu (Mantis) Edges, and the Vow (Bring peace to Xin Huihuang) Hindrance.

TALK O' THE TOWN

A number of story opportunities hide within the twin cities of Grant's Pass and Xin Huihuang. Here's a short Savage Tale to get started with, Marshal.

GHOST SIOUX SIEGE

Location: Grant's Pass (Fear Level 2)

It's hard to live so near Indian Lands without the Sioux's permission; one is constantly under siege by them. Grant's Pass has refused to knuckle under (in defiance of both the *wicasas* and Washington), so it tends to the latter. Complicating matters is how much Grant's Pass sticks in the craws of Warlord Kang and Mina Devlin. At this point, pretty much everyone is out to get them—and they'd have done it by now, too, if the city weren't so well-defended.

The Story So Far

When Joshua Chamberlain sent his men into Grant's Pass, he fully intended for them to make it a permanent home, defensible from the Sioux or anyone else. That sort of preparedness served the city well; even the rail line was going to have gated entrances in and out of the city. Nowadays, though, without Chamberlain's guidance or much Union Blue presence to speak of, some of those defenses have weakened.

This is exactly what the Ravenites have been waiting for. With Kangi ("Crow Carries Water") as their inside man, local Ravenites receive a steady supply of modern weapons. Their stockpile has grown to the point where they think they can raid the city proper. Even these opportunistic young braves know better than to attempt that with all the city's defenses intact.

As a means to this end, Kangi has been testing and prodding the walls of the city from the inside, trying to find a critical weakness. The aforementioned gates for the rail cars still stand, and Kangi discovered a group could be smuggled in—and out again—undetected, and quite swiftly.

Ghost Raids

What this means for the posse is one of their evenings in Grant's Pass is interrupted by the telltale whooping and gunfire that accompanies an Indian raid. Bolting from their beds, the heroes see Sioux running rampant through the city—then suddenly gone as if they'd never been there at all.

If it weren't for the evidence of an occasional tomahawk, destroyed store, or bullet hole, it'd be easy to write the event off as a bad dream. Kangi has started rumors that the attack was the work of "ghost Sioux" who are displeased at so many outsiders residing on "sacred land."

Most of Kangi's effectiveness as a spy has been due to keeping his mouth shut. Once he starts spreading the rumors, he gives any prying investigators a chance to trace the ghost stories and weird rumors back to him. Doing so requires at least one successful Streetwise roll (-2).

Alternatively, with a successful Tracking roll (-2) the posse might stumble upon some hurriedly hidden tracks that lead back to the rail car gate. This gives heroes the option to wait for the next ambush (and plan one of their own) or try to track down whoever operated the gates inside...which leads back to Kangi, of course.

Whether or not shootists discover Kangi's treachery, by capturing, killing, or driving off the next group of raiders they can eliminate a threat to Grant's Pass—at the cost of making eternal enemies of the Ravenites.

- **"Ghost Sioux" Ravenites (2 per hero):** Use Indian Brave (Veteran) stats in the *Deadlands Marshal's Handbook*, but replace the Old Ways Oath with the Vow (Serve the Order of the Raven) Hindrance.

Culverton

Culverton got its humble start when a Canadian named Eric Culver purchased 4,800 acres of land for the princely sum of \$40,000. Building on the banks of a Mississippi River tributary, Culver expected to turn his city into a major inland port for transferring goods throughout the Confederacy. At first this was a boon to the city, with access to a major waterway allowing a great deal of commerce to pass through and drawing businesses to set up shop.

Unfortunately, Culver didn't count on the Civil War, and moreso, he didn't count on pirates taking over the town. A brutal Union loyalist named Joseph Buckley turned his good eye towards Culverton and saw an ideal base for raiding Confederate supply lines, by land and water alike.

Buckley was an incredible tactician and a man with an eye for cash. By replacing the aging Mayor Culver and installing men loyal to him in other positions of influence, Buckley became the official "naval trade consultant" to the

city under the assumed name Carlton Smith. Buckley figured that by hiding in plain sight, he'd accomplish a lot more than if he tried to maintain an island base like Lafitte.

Buckley ran many successful raids into Confederate territory, always



POINTS OF INTEREST

Here are some of the best-known, biggest, and most popular places in Culverton, as shown on the nearby map.

Chancer's Variety Theater: At Chancer's one can enjoy popular entertainments such as singers, dancing girls, one-act plays, musicals, comedians, and the like.

Culverton Soothsayer: Offices of the popular local rag, usually manned by young reporter Chesterton Ward.

Floyd's Pirate River Tours: Though it's the object of a good bit of local derision, Floyd Brock keeps running his lucrative river tours past Pirate Buckley's old haunts.

Harbor: Culverton maintains a brisk river trade on the Mississippi, overseen by harbormaster Monroe Wagoner.

Opera House: Owned and operated by Ms. Henriette Deschaine, the opera house caters to the upper crust and provides refined entertainment for discriminating tastes.

Town Hall: Here Judge Heathcliff Crittenden dispenses justice, and the town fathers devise new ways to make Culverton the capital city of the CSA.

retreating to Culverton. The locals didn't complain too much, as Buckley's raids brought plenty of cash and goods for the open commerce of the city, as well as the covert. Culverton itself was never sacked or attacked by pirates, so more and more legitimate commerce headed that way.

Legends sprang up about Buckley and his amazing ability to evade capture. Tall tales spread far and wide, giving Buckley a supernatural stature throughout the

South. Rumored to have a ship—named the *Blue Gibbon*—that could disappear entirely from view, some called Buckley a pawn of the Devil himself. It didn't hurt that Buckley and his crew fostered these tales, believing they added to their success and reputation.

After the ceasefire, continued tales of ghostly ability caught the ears of a Texas Ranger. The fact that Buckley had raided a few Ranger encampments during the war probably didn't help him avoid notice, either.

The first Ranger to come gunning for Buckley vanished off the face of the earth. When further investigation determined that Carlton Smith and Pirate Buckley were one and the same, hell came to Culverton. The next Texas Ranger did not play games; he scuttled every ship in Culverton's port, rounded up a posse, and began searching for Buckley. In a series of shootouts that lasted several days, the Ranger and his band whittled down Buckley's forces and cut off his local support.

Buckley holed up in a general store, judging it to be the best-supplied location to make such a stand, and determined to wait out his hunters. Days later a Ranger Regimental Band arrived by steamboat, and began a ceaseless medley of sailors' songs to taunt the beleaguered pirate. Trapped, his crew routed, it's said Buckley hung himself from a beam in his lonely hideout to make the lurching shanties go silent.

Legend still holds that Buckley was too mean to die from hanging, that it would take a Ranger's bullet to finish the deed. The people of the city have tried to move on, but Pirate Buckley's legacy has overshadowed them for many years. That's because the tales fomented by Buckley and his crew have taken on a dark existence of their own, thanks to the Reckoning.

1. Chancer's Variety Theater
2. Culverton Soothsayer
3. Floyd's Pirate River Tours
4. Harbor
5. Opera House
6. Town Hall

Culverton

THE CITY NOW

Region: Mississippi River

Fear Level: 2

Culverton is a Confederate city trying its best to become far, far more important than it is. Twice now Culverton has made a bid to become the capital of the CSA—both times falling *far* short of the mark despite its teeming population of approximately 5,000. But life is still big and grand here, the booming port attracting more people daily.

Any posse that makes it to Culverton from the wide-open spaces of the West is sure to be struck by the city's sheer size. It's not the biggest in the West, but it's certainly ahead of the curve, and far larger than most of the flyspeck burgs dotting the dusty trail.

Culverton tries to do everything bigger than anywhere else. If a stunt is tried, Culverton city officials convince

someone to attempt to double the feat in their town. Sometimes these publicity stunts work, other times they end in spectacular failure—but either way, they draw people and attention.

Culverton has a significant tourist economy, Pirate Buckley's past exploits drawing curious travelers. Enterprising locals have turned some of the pirates' possessions (and a number of fakes) into a lucrative business, even including tours of his "pirate hideout."

Traveling performers, freak shows, and circuses often stop here, finding the city hospitable to their events—for a short time, anyway. The nightlife bustles in Culverton; the city books plays, musicians, and even operas to present itself as a cultured, refined place.

Culverton's competitive nature extends to every aspect of life—a newspaper named the *Culverton Soothsayer* is trying to rival the *Epitaph* in printing stories of the weird and unexplained. The *Soothsayer* has a very

limited circulation as of yet, much of its content less spectacular than its Tombstone sibling. Filling the paper out with fluff stories and short fiction, reporter Chesterton Ward and the paper's editors hope to soon grab a scoop to put it on the map.

Despite its history, Culverton is reputed to be hard on criminals these days. The local head Judge, Heathcliff Crittenden, is ruthless, cruel, and bloodthirsty. He often hands down punishments wildly out of proportion with the crime committed. He's even happy to provide an illusion of escape, telling prisoners that if they complete some impossible task he'll let them go free. The sad result is several of the local law have stopped arresting people for minor crimes, feeling that, say, *losing an arm* might be a little too severe a penalty for starting a bar fight.

Buckley's legacy haunts Culverton not just in the cruel overreactions of Crittenden but also in more sinister ways. The black market established during Buckley's reign of terror exists to this day, hidden in back streets and riverside alcoves pocketed through the city. Anything—and anyone—can be bought or sold here, if you know the right names or pay the right bribes.

THE LOCALS

Culverton's people are as big and boisterous as the city itself. Many are in the tourist business, with a number of snakeoil salesmen in training. A city this size has quite a few civil servants, from politicians to a marshal and deputies of all ages, origins, and stripes. But the specter of the city's past still hangs over it, at times giving a sinister and suspicious feel to dealings with the residents.

Chesterton Ward

Chesterton Ward looks every bit the young reporter. Stylishly dressed and

bespectacled, his short hair well-styled and always under a hat, there's no mistaking him for an average citizen. Pencil and notepad at the ready, Ward constantly seems to be in motion. Sharp of wit and well-read, he's meticulous about sourcing information and getting every possible angle on a story. His articles in the *Soothsayer* are amongst the paper's most popular.

Chesterton Ward harbors not one, but two interesting secrets. First, Ward was born Charlotte Ward. She's been posing as a man because her early stories were rejected by the papers unless she submitted them as a "letter to the editor." Second, she's one of Pirate Buckley's children. She's been using her role as a reporter not only to make a living, but also to unearth the truth behind the final disposition of her father's ill-gotten gains.

- **Chesterton Ward:** Use Townsfolk stats in the *Deadlands Marshal's Handbook*, but add Smarts d8, Investigation d8, Persuasion d8, Streetwise d8, and the Attractive and Investigator Edges.

Floyd Brock

Floyd is one of Culverton's local attractions, much to the dismay of Judge Crittenden and other sons of the South. Floyd runs several "Pirate River Tours" that draw in mobs of tourists. Flamboyantly dressed in a modified Union Army uniform, he paints Buckley as noble antihero—as much a Union spy and military genius as murderous pirate. Unsurprisingly, a good portion of the population loathes Floyd Brock and his interpretation of their history.

Guiding people through the harbor, Floyd ends the tour in a small cave said to contain part of the *Blue Gibbon's* scuttled hull. Actually, it's a scrap of hull that Brock painted the fragmented words "*lue Gibbo*" on, and sank in the cave.

Floyd also runs the Authentic Pirate Museum & Souvenir Shop near the harbor,

passing off wood slivers as shards of the *Blue Gibbon's* hull, and the like. He's sold "the rope that hung Pirate Buckley" no less than four times to gullible history scholars. Despite his shady nature, Floyd makes sure to keep everything aboveboard when watchful eyes are around, in order to avoid facing Crittenden on trumped-up fraud charges.

Floyd Brock: Use Townsfolk stats in the *Deadlands Marshal's Handbook*, adding Boating d8, Persuasion d8, and Stealth d8.

Heathcliff Crittenden

Crittenden isn't just a hangin' judge—he's a cut-off-their-hands judge, a firing-squad judge, a draw-and-quarter-'em judge, and sometimes, surprisingly, just a judge. A short, dumpy man, he makes up for his inadequacies by being the most feared and powerful city official around. Even other judges give him a wide berth, not wanting to appear in the courtroom across from him.

Crittenden's fanatical zeal isn't just due to a passion for law and order—he has a very personal stake in this. He's a bastard child of Pirate Buckley, a secret he's kept hidden for the majority of his life. Although he shares his father's bloodthirsty and ruthless nature, he hopes that he can absolve himself by "straightening out" the criminal element in Culverton.

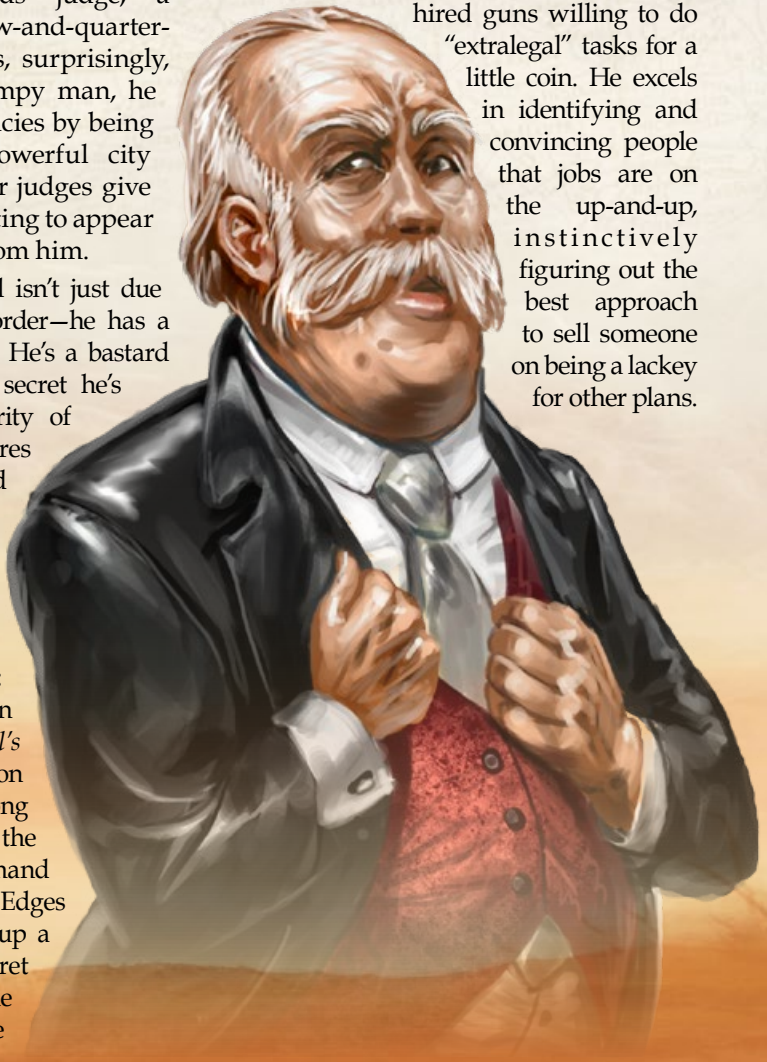
• Heathcliff Crittenden:

Use Townsfolk stats in the *Deadlands Marshal's Handbook*. Add Intimidation d8, Taunt d8, the Strong Willed Edge, and the Command, Command Presence, and Inspire Edges for whenever he rounds up a posse. He has the Dark Secret Hindrance, and also the Bloodthirsty Hindrance (though it's no secret).

Loomis "Crazy-Eye" Hattie

"Crazy-Eye" Hattie is the man to know when you want something that isn't available on the open market. If it exists and can be bought, copied, or outright stolen, Hattie "knows a fella" who can do that for you. He can navigate Culverton's black market like no one else, always knowing which doors to knock on—and how to do the knocking—to get whatever you might need. So long as you're willing to pay up, that is...

Hattie's more than just an hombre in the know, however. He works well as a middle man, able to size up hired guns willing to do "extralegal" tasks for a little coin. He excels in identifying and convincing people that jobs are on the up-and-up, instinctively figuring out the best approach to sell someone on being a lackey for other plans.



Ironically, Crittenden has been a boon to Hattie's business, as decent folk are horrified by some of the ruthless judge's sentences. Hattie regularly cites the judge's tyrannical reputation as justification for his crimes, since, as Hattie puts it, "Only a dishonest man is honest in this town."

- **Loomis Hattie:** Use Townsfolk stats in the *Deadlands Marshal's Handbook*, adding Persuasion d8, Streetwise d10, plus the Connections (Black market), Snakeoil Salesman, and Charismatic Edges.

Monroe Wagoner

Wagoner is the harbormaster of Culverton and perhaps the most financially stable of the city's officials. It's long been an open secret among criminals that to get anything in or out of Culverton by water, a small "donation" to the harbormaster makes it happen without inspection.

Monroe Wagoner is corrupt to the bone, willing to extort fees at any opportunity and to skim a portion off the top. He keeps the books himself, making sure to hide his embezzlement between the lines.

A former sailor, Wagoner is mum on whom he might have sailed with in the past. He's a massive individual, standing over six feet tall and thick at the shoulders. He's painfully aware of his size, using it to intimidate people who refuse to pay one of his outlandish fees or start asking too many questions.

Wagoner hides a pretty big secret, as well—he's none other than the infamous Pirate Buckley. Turns out all those tales about no rope being able to kill Buckley were correct, or the Reckoners just made them so. In either case, the great pirate pulled himself out of the ground determined to keep a firm hold on what he's always considered his personal property—the city of Culverton.

- **Monroe Wagoner:** See Pirate Buckley on page 124.

TALK O' THE TOWN

A whole heap of adventure opportunities lurk in Culverton's streets and back alleys. A few suggestions are provided here for your convenience, Marshal.

A JUST CRIME?

Location: Culverton (Fear Level 2)

Run this tale when the travelers are settling in at the local hotel, where they see people in all sorts of odd predicaments. Read the following passage:

One man sits at the bar, nursing a wrapped arm missing a hand. Another walks past on crutches, pain crossing his face with every step. You see an old woman with a fresh eye patch, and young street ruffians with bandaged arms. The more you look, the more people you see with various physical impediments.

Ol' Crazy-Eye

After a few minutes "Crazy-Eye" Hattie drops in and starts answering questions, whether they were asked or not. He says,

You've noticed the victims, eh? They're victims of Crittenden, and his brand of justice. That man there without a hand—he was caught stealing food for his family. The hobbled one? He was sentenced to have his legs smashed after he kicked a man in a bar fight. All because of Crittenden's hatred for the good folk of this community.

Once Hattie feels he has the sympathy of the posse, he weaves another tale. Pointing out a lone figure in a corner, a nebbish man deep in his liquor, Hattie relays,

That man there is one Dr. Felton, a medical doctor and inventor who was working on a new machine. A wondrous machine. The device would allow him to see into a patient's body without hurting

them. But it was horribly loud, and the neighbors made a fuss. Judge Crittenden had the machine and all the doctor's notes impounded after several noise complaints.

I feel just horrible for the poor dude. He only ever wanted to help people. I can't stand to see the doctor crushed, his life's work unjustly ripped from him.

There's just no reasoning with Crittenden, though there might be a way for brave souls to recover the doctor's machine. You buckaroos happen to know anyone that might be interested?

If Hattie senses any interest in the suggestion, he goes on,

I know one of the bailiffs at the impound lot, who gave me a map, including the location of the device. I just need a few stealthy buckaroos to retrieve it during the guard change at 10:00 p.m.

Mission Accepted

Savvy cowpokes might suspect something's up, but the drunken doctor in the corner earnestly and honestly confirms every detail of Hattie's story. Should the heroes take

on the mission, Hattie enthusiastically thanks them, suggesting they meet at midnight behind the hotel. He then excuses himself to console his (now obviously drunk) "friend" and return him to his room.

The actual recovery of the device isn't too difficult—at first. Hattie's map shows a break in the tall wooden fencing surrounding Judge Crittenden's impound lot. The device itself is just inside the gate, covered with a tarp. It's large and weighs a little more than 300 lbs., but there are wheels on the bottom to help move it. A successful Strength roll (min. Strength d6) moves it with no trouble.

The machine itself looks like two eight-inch thick tabletops, separated by two feet, with poles on the outside. Two of the opposite sides are open with no poles, indicating that someone would put an injured body part between the two tables. A successful Weird Science or applicable Knowledge roll allows an egghead to deduce that it's some kind of large, crude camera. (Barring that, a cowpoke could take a gander at the detailed instruction manual lying on top of it.)



It's Complicated

Having the device is one thing, but getting it back to the alley behind the hotel—along with the doctor's copious notes—is another. There's a risk of being spotted by one of Crittenden's bailiffs or a deputy marshal on patrol. Make a Stealth roll for each stealthy hombre, opposed by the deputies (with the deputies assumed to be inactive guards).

Deputies (2): Use Gunman stats in the *Deadlands Marshal's Handbook*. They're armed with shotguns (Range: 12/24/48, Damage: 1-3d6, RoF: 1, Shots: 1, Shooting +2), and have six extra shells each.

The Hand-Off

Behind the hotel, Hattie waits with a few men, ready to tote the device away. Hattie says quickly as the posse arrives,

Good work. We've got to get this thing to the doctor's lab for safekeeping.

Hattie stays and chats with the posse, distracting them from the device's removal as much as he can. His men simply load the parcel into a small, horse-drawn wagon and take it away if they're not prevented.

A Notice roll allows a suspicious cowpoke to realize Hattie's nervous about something. In fact, Hattie has a buyer lined up for the impounded device, and he intends to deliver it to the buyer instead of the doctor.

If Hattie is confronted, he tries to talk his way out of it, offering whatever his Connections can provide that will extract him from this mess (and hopefully buying time for his men to get away). If the posse goes straight for the movers, they complain they don't get paid enough to fight, and promptly surrender.

- **Loomis Hattie:** Use Townsfolk stats in the *Deadlands Marshal's Handbook*, adding Persuasion d8, Streetwise d10, plus the Connections (Black market), Snakeoil Salesman, and Charismatic Edges.

- **Henchmen (4):** Use Townsfolk stats in the *Deadlands Marshal's Handbook*, but add Strength d8.

Sorting Out the Mess

No matter what, the posse is in a difficult situation. If they take Hattie and the device to the marshal or bailiffs, they probably have to confess to stealing it in the first place. Likewise, killing any man who surrenders brings along some unwanted attention.

Hattie offers to let the heroes return the device to the rightful owner, with the understanding that he won't ever lie to them again. In exchange for his freedom, Hattie offers the posse any one thing they want or need that his Connections can provide—at your discretion, Marshal.

RETURN O' THE BLUE GIBBON

Location: Culverton (Fear Level 3)

All of Culverton is awash with tales of the *Blue Gibbon*, returned from its watery grave to hunt ships and their living crews. The Fear Level rises to 3 until someone can solve the mystery and set things right.

Extra! Extra!

At a couple places around town, newsboys hawk the *Soothsayer*. Of interest is a contest sponsored by Chesterton Ward, senior reporter, to confirm or disprove reports of the *Blue Gibbon* patrolling the waters near Culverton. Anyone with valid information gets to choose between \$100, or a year's worth of tickets to the local opera. Either choice also nets the winner a subscription to the *Soothsayer*, naturally.

Asking around town with a successful Streetwise roll yields rumors about the *Blue Gibbon* and its history. The few

"eyewitness" reports are from drunks and late-night partygoers, making it difficult to discern the truth. See the **Rumors & Hearsay** sidebar.

Surveying the River

Should the posse investigate the recent sinkings, they find a few others camping out trying to spot the infamous craft. Most of the thrill-seekers fall asleep prior to midnight. For those who stay awake, read the following:

To your amazement, a ship rises from the low-lying fog. It looks rotted and worn, with Blue Gibbon clearly emblazoned on the side. Blinding lights appear from within the rotted hulk, washing over the shore, before the ship slowly sinks beneath the black water.

Anyone with the Boating skill, or a background in nautical matters—ship building, sailing, etc.—can, with a successful Common Knowledge roll, determine that the craft they saw was not seaworthy. A raise on the roll determines it wasn't even a vessel, but rather supported from beneath somehow, not floating and bouncing with the waves the way a real ship would.

The Hidden Cove

Should the posse sail in the direction the ship was headed, a discovery awaits. A successful Notice roll (-2) reveals a small, natural harbor and cave about two miles north of the city on the opposite side of the river. The searchers arrive just in time to see the fake *Blue Gibbon* rise from the water and sail into the cave. If the posse brought a canoe (or traveled by water), they can reach it easily. Otherwise, they have to go through the effort of swimming across.

Read the following if the heroes approach without being detected:

Voices echo from the cave. Two men emerge, following a rough path formed beside the water. Working swiftly, they cover the entrance to the cave with tarps

RUMORS & HEARSAY

Other rumors are possible besides these, but we figured we'd provide a few to get you started, Marshal. For each success and raise on a Streetwise roll, provide one of the following rumors:

Death from Below: The *Blue Gibbon* has the ability to sink below the waves, bursting into sight when another vessel gets too close and smashing them to pieces. Most reports state it only appears after midnight, ghostly light shining from it, a half-mile or so north of the port.

Ghost Pirate: Locals insist the ghost of Pirate Buckley haunts the area, still trying to find his lost treasure.

Buckley's Revenge: Others say Buckley's ghost seeks revenge on the Texas Rangers that trapped him and caused his death.

Lost Treasure: Few folks agree on what Pirate Buckley's lost treasure might consist of, or its location, but all agree it's somewhere in the riverbed mud.

Union Cache: It's said Pirate Buckley maintained a sizeable cache of weapons—rifles, cannons, ammunition, and gunpowder—somewhere near Culverton. The cache has yet to be discovered.

RIVERBED SWEEPER

The mysterious benefactor who shall not be named is far more terrifying than the posse. In fact, it was Monroe Wagoner—Pirate Buckley himself—who commissioned the craft with a mad scientist in Salt Lake City and had it delivered to Culverton. Wagoner doesn't care what mischief the boys get up to—the more, the merrier—as long as the legend of Pirate Buckley keeps growing.

Acc/Top Speed: 5/10 (4/8 submerged); **Toughness:** 10 (2); **Crew:** 2+2; **Cost:** \$18,000; **Notes:** Travels approximately 50 surface miles on one pound of ghost rock. The hull contains four man-hours of oxygen.

Malfunction: If a Boating roll results in snake eyes, the submersible's clockworks fail catastrophically for 3d6 damage in a Medium Burst Template. Depending on the result of this roll, the crew and passengers may find themselves in grave danger (submerged with no means of surfacing, for example).

A result of 1 on the Boating die (regardless of the Wild Die), means the submersible overheats and shakes violently. The driver and passengers take 2d6 damage. In addition, the submersible is disabled and unusable until it's fixed, which requires a Repair roll and 2d6 rounds to complete.

stained with mud and leaves. As they work, they talk softly.

"The ship should have been there. That's exactly where it blew."

"You said it couldn't have made it more than a mile. That's a lot of riverbed to cover."

"We'll find it, don't worry. I won't let our efforts go to waste."

If the pesky cowpokes choose to confront the pair, they find a pair of dock workers willing to defend their little scheme with weapons and fists, if needed. If they choose to follow the duo, they're led south to a rowboat hidden in the reeds, which the two men use to sail back to Culverton's port.

Dock Workers (2): Use Maze Pirate stats in *Deadlands Marshal's Handbook*.

If the dock workers are defeated, and successfully Intimidated, Persuaded, or Taunted into giving up the truth, they spill the beans. They have been identifying ships with valuable cargo, sabotaging them mechanically or with explosives, then using their unique craft to pick through the wreckage on the riverbed. They won't under any circumstances say how they got the submersible, only that a "benefactor" in town was involved in its acquisition—one who insisted it look like the famous pirate craft.

Aftermath

When the nosy investigators check the inside of the cave, they find the false *Blue Gibbon*. It's a small, four-man submersible with a false top (see sidebar). A lighting rig powered by the submarine sits on top as well, allowing passengers to see well into murky waters.

The mystery solved, the posse can either report the truth back to Chesterton Ward and win the *Soothsayer* contest, take the dock workers into custody, or both.

The saboteurs' fate isn't pretty—they end up in front of Crittenden and are hanged by the end of the week. As for Ward, the *Soothsayer* pays the reward to the posse and runs a piece on the "New Pirates of Culverton."

Josephine

Josephine was founded in the way many cities of the West were—people got tired of moving on, so they decided to make the best of where they ended up. The city founder was one Manfred Amsler, who saw the snowy peaks and was reminded of his Swiss home and heritage. As the city grew with tons of European influence, Manfred became so enamored with it that he named it after his teenage daughter.

A lovely ginger-haired girl, at first she seemed at home in the mountains, often hiking and exploring with friends. A few years on, though, she took ill. Around that time Manfred began building a better home for his family, one with all types of modern innovations—and oddly, very few windows.

It seemed that Josephine was no longer the sweet, vibrant girl that had come to settle with her family. Rumors swirled around the city about how the girl had grown pale, and she was only seen for brief moments at dawn and dusk. It came as a surprise to townsfolk

when Manfred announced his daughter was marrying a betrothed from “back home,” a man of similar complexion and sleeping habits. Eventually, though, the rumors died down, and now Josephine’s cousins have inherited her family mansion—and her habits.

The city became a significant hub for trade, as trappers and furriers flocked to the area for its abundance of wildlife. With a strong reputation and growing wealth behind it, Josephine became a bustling retreat. Several hundred people, drawn by the “old world” charm or the profitable fur trade, now make it their home.

Curiously, few churches have been able to keep a congregation. It’s not that the people aren’t faithful, but *bad things* seem to happen to churches in the city. Fires, lightning storms, minor avalanches, and even what is purported to have been packs of wolves have destroyed houses of God in the past.

Nowadays, people just don’t even try to build a new one.



THE CITY NOW

Region: Pacific Northwest

Fear Level: 3

Josephine is the exact opposite of a town one would expect to find in the Pacific Northwest. Whereas your average place is rugged and rough-hewn, Josephine is as pristine as its name. People here are vibrant and boisterous, rarely even unfriendly. Its warm and inviting atmosphere belies the snows into which it is comfortably nestled. With the occasional bleating of sheep or cattle, one would think she'd walked out of the West and into Europe. Of course, this façade is a sham—it wouldn't do to take anything here at face value.

The Amslers, although not the political heads, for all intents and purposes run Josephine. Jolene and Stefan Amsler are rarely seen, but the mere mention of their names can bring a hush to the noisiest

saloon. Those who cross the Amslers rarely do so a second time. Their presence, cruising through the streets in a very regal carriage, sets everyone into disquiet and a rush to get indoors. Almost all business is handled through their servants, with only the rare visitor ever called to dine with them.

There's still money to be made in Josephine, so people head there with golden dreams. Trading with natives from the Pacific Northwest can be enormously profitable, and Josephine is often used as a way station for doing so. The amount and diversity of wildlife also brings those looking to trade in furs and exotic leathers, so trappers and hunters also use Josephine as a base. Sometimes those craving adventure—such as trailblazers and cartographers headed for the mountains—stop this way.

Upon entering the city, a cowpoke is first struck by the overall cleanliness, then by the bouquet of aromas. The founders of



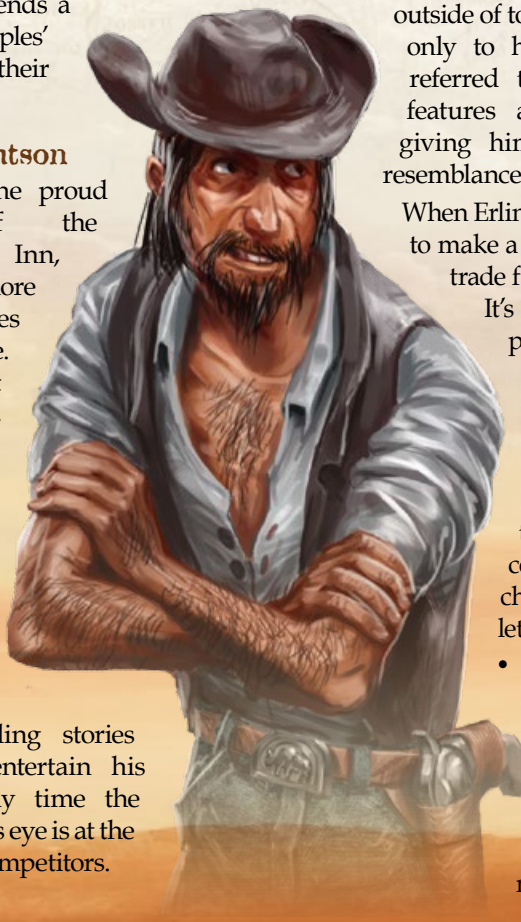
the city loved the foods from their home, so as a result multiple inns and taverns specialize in Swiss fare. Cheeses, rosti, cervalet sausages—and yes, *chocolate*—are all popular foods here. It's rare for a traveler to leave unfed or unsatisfied.

THE LOCALS

It's hard for your average cowpoke to look at the people of Josephine and not feel he's been dropped 50 years in the past of Eastern Europe. The cold weather gives cheeks a perpetual rosy bloom, warm clothing hiding most people's body sizes and builds. Genial to a fault, the people seem outwardly cheery and delightful. But look closely, and it's clear that years under the rule of the Amslers lends a sadness to peoples' eyes that belies their friendly cheer.

Arnbjorg Knutson

Arnbjorg is the proud proprietor of the Leaping Deer Inn, one of the more popular eateries in Josephine. If he weren't completely bald, he'd fit the stereotypical description of Santa Claus. A man of large proportions and an even louder personality, he's always telling stories and jokes to entertain his guests. The only time the twinkle leaves his eye is at the mention of his competitors.



Known for its deer sausage and other rustic dishes, the Leaping Deer has recently started to lose ground as the premier establishment in town to Buckhorn Tavern. Their new "secret recipe" Buckhorn sausages are the talk of the town. Arnbjorg suspects something is off about the new delicacy, often musing aloud as to how they're able to make such sweet sausage without molasses or sugar...

- **Arnbjorg Knutson:** Use Townsfolk stats in the *Deadlands Marshal's Handbook*.

Erling "Weasel" Godmundsdottir

Erling not only owns Buckhorn Tavern, he is also an avid hunter and trapper. Unlike Arnbjorg, Erling is reclusive and secretive. He goes so far as to prepare his trademark Buckhorn sausages in a hidden location outside of town, using a recipe known only to him. He's "affectionately" referred to as Weasel, his gaunt features and scraggly, dark hair giving him more than a passing resemblance to the rodent.

When Erling is seen in town, it's either to make a delivery to Buckhorn or to trade furs with Gregory Hobston.

It's well known that he has private apartments behind the Buckhorn Tavern, though he's rarely seen around them. Rarely talkative, those who do meet and greet Erling tend to describe him as rude and condescending—not that the cheerful people of Josephine let that get them down.

- **Erling Godmundsdottir:** Use Soldier stats in the *Deadlands Marshal's Handbook*.

Eva Westberg

Wherever there are miners, traders, or furriers,

POINTS OF INTEREST

Here are some notable places in Josephine, as shown on the nearby map.

Amsler Estate: Perched on the hills just outside Josephine, this traditional Swiss chalet is the ancestral home of the Amsler Family...and their unrelenting evil.

Buckhorn Tavern: More a drinking establishment than an eatery—though it does serve vittles—the Buckhorn is run by Erling “Weasel” Godmundsdottir and is popular among hunters.

Hobston’s Furs: Gregory Hobston, a former slave, provides taxidermy services and various furred clothing items.

Leaping Deer Inn: Owned by Arnbjorg Knutson, this cozy restaurant and tavern is among the city’s most popular.

Winsome Salon: Run by Eva Westberg, this beauty parlor and barber shop is actually just a front for the local brothel. Those hankering for company on a cold, lonely night can find it here for the right price, along with a clean shave and a bath.

there are brothels nearby. Some operate openly, flaunting their profession and business in front of the entire town. Others, like Eva’s establishment, are a bit more covert in their dealings. For the entire town to see, the Winsome Salon is a beauty parlor and barber shop that serves everyone. The fact that many of the men who go in for a bath and a shave come out looking almost as unkempt as when they entered is one of the few giveaways as to what goes on behind closed doors.

Eva leads a life of luxury. Her beauty is pristine; at first glance her complexion seems to match porcelain. Her blond hair

is always neatly pulled back, her dresses and clothing immaculate. She flits back and forth between the front and back of the house, checking on all of her clients.

It’s no surprise that a woman in her position keeps a great number of secrets, since she’s always at the center of information about the town. In public, she gives the Amslers a wide berth, leading many to believe the Amslers have little knowledge of what Eva does. Nothing could be further from the truth—Eva acts as the eyes and ears of the Amslers in the town, going so far as to identify potential victims for their unholy thirst (see below).

- **Eva Westberg:** Use Townsfolk stats in the *Deadlands Marshal’s Handbook*, adding Persuasion d10 and the Charismatic and Very Attractive Edges.

Gregory Hobston

Gregory is a vibrant and pleasant man. He’s truly thankful for his life in Josephine, having escaped from slavery in the South during the Civil War. He’s accepted by everyone in Josephine, and Hobston’s Furs, his taxidermy and fur shop, is bustling throughout the day. Whether they’re customers, traders, or acquaintances, someone’s always around.

Gregory has become concerned about Jory Helgramme (see below). Gregory’s seen that haunted, hunted look on men’s faces before and it makes him nervous. For Helgramme’s part, he suspects Gregory’s success might come at the cost of dealings with the Amslers beyond just selling them fine fur clothing. Either way, the two men have begun to go out of their way to avoid each other, leading people to talk.

Gregory Hobston: Use Townsfolk stats in the *Deadlands Marshal’s Handbook*.

Jolene Amsler

Let’s get one thing out of the way, Marshal—Jolene Amsler and Josephine Amsler are one and the same person. Now we can tell you the whole story.

While spelunking alone years ago, the poor girl stumbled upon an extensive cache of human remains—an abattoir of bones. She was curious, seeing all the dead bodies lying about, as to what could have caused such carnage. She discovered her folly when she met Mythos—a spawn of the legendary Count Dracula—who resented the intrusion on his sanctuary.

He took Josephine as one of his “children,” giving her the dark gift of vampirism. He hoped to make her his immortal bride. Instead, she found out how to kill him, and afterward made a pet of a passing explorer with whom to share her eternal unlife.

Her lithe frame hides an incredible amount of power, and her eyes turn bloodshot red when in the throes of rage. Even though she’s ill-tempered, she’s also very smart. She’s made sure that all her meals were people passing through the city, and not the residents. When she has to, she dines on an actual animal or (as a last resort) one of the townsfolk, always taking care to choose someone whose absence is easily explained.

Jolene views the city as hers—it bears her name, after all—wanting to keep it static and unchanging as long as possible, a cheerful reminder of the home she knew as a child. But strange beasts stalk the fringes of the city more often than anyone likes to admit. Maybe the Reckoners don’t like an abomination that refuses to feed them more Fear.

• **Jolene Amsler:** See page 119.

Jory Helgramme

Jolene and Stefan Amsler aren’t the town’s only dangerous residents to travel here from the Old World... so too has come Jory Helgramme. He’s one of the few city folk who can be seen to carry not just weapons, but a single silver cross on a chain around his neck. He scours the inns and restaurants for newly arrived travelers, hoping to discern whether they are threats or potential allies.

ACCURSED COUNTRYSIDE

The bucolic farmland, forests, rocky crags, and hilly meadows around Josephine are beautiful and inviting. But for some reason—known to locals as “The Curse”—they hide more than their share of weird abominations looking to prey on travelers. Roll a d6 and consult the table below whenever the posse enters or leaves Josephine to see what they run across outside the city limits... or what runs across *them*.

d6	Result
1	2d6 wolves (see <i>Savage Worlds</i>)
2	d6 wolflings
3	Catamount
4	1d6 cemetery wolves
5	Chinook
6	Dire wolf (see <i>Savage Worlds</i>)

Jory keeps an eye on the Amslers, instinctively certain of their nature but lacking proof of their undead status. Still, he knows someday one of them will slip—then he’ll be ready to wipe them out and burn down their estate. Recently he’s come across a diary in a language he’s never read, which fuels his suspicions, as the final page features a *very* old sketch of Jolene Amsler.

• **Jory Helgramme:** See page 123.

Stefan Amsler

Amsler isn’t Stefan’s true last name—but he’s forgotten his prior surname entirely. Enraptured by Jolene (née Josephine) when he first met her, he allowed her to subjugate his will entirely. Now he carries her name, so there will always be an Amsler in the town of Josephine.

Stefan was a trapper before he met Jolene, and that's reflected in his short, compact build. His dark hair always seems to just cover his eyes, which fire darts of rage at the tiniest slight towards Jolene. Stefan follows Jolene's lead in all regards, wearing fine clothing and trying to stay very cautious.

Trying, though, isn't necessarily *doing*. Stefan always appears just a little out of place. Also, he's not always so careful about how he selects his victims—which is likely to become a big problem for him.

- **Stefan Amsler:** See page 120.

TALK O' THE TOWN

A number of opportunities for twisted tales hide in and around Josephine. Here's a general suggestion along with a few Savage Tales.

Huntsmen on the Hoof

With all the critters lurking about, those brave enough to go monster hunting near Josephine are sure to get on the town's good side pretty quickly. Granted, that involves a good amount of soul-scarring fear and danger.

Each night the posse rides the wilds near town, draw an Action Card and roll a d6, using the **Accursed Countryside** sidebar on page 57. On a face card, double the amount of critters faced. If the face card is a Joker, roll twice on the table and combine the results, *and* double the amount of any varmints on the scene.

AMSLERS' END

Location: Josephine (Fear Level 3)

Run this little tale when you want to impart the real history of Josephine, and begin a brand-new era at the same time. Naturally, that means putting your posse square in the path of oncoming thirsty vampires.

The Story So Far

Recently, former monster hunter Jory Helgramme acquired the diary of Manfred Amsler from contacts in Seattle. It is written in code, one that Helgramme is desperate to crack. As he suspects, the diary holds the secret history of Jolene. Manfred knew all along what his daughter had become, but he couldn't bring himself to kill her. In the process he cursed the town to never ending Fear, which is what draws abominations to the wilds all around.

The Set-Up

As your posse exits one of the inns of Josephine at night, the cowpokes nearly run smack into Stefan Amsler. Read the following passage:

The noble Stefan Amsler stops short as he's leaving the shop of Gregory Hobston. He has a new sable coat cradled in his arms. He sneers at you, "Step back into your place!" and passes by in a huff, climbing into a waiting carriage.

Amsler ignores any jibes the cowpokes might toss his way (although he responds in kind to violence).

- **Stefan Amsler:** See page 120.

As the scene seems to be winding down, read this out loud:

The carriage trundles noisily down the cobblestones a bit, then stops. Stefan reemerges, and approaches you once more.

"I must apologize for my impertinence," he says earnestly. "I have had a bit too much wine this evening. Please let me make it up to you, since you're new in town.

"Join me and my lovely wife for dinner at our estate tomorrow night. A joyful gathering, savory foods, and plentiful libations should help to repair any insult from my poor manners.

"I must mention, however, that Jolene prefers formal attire at our gatherings. The Winsome Salon and Hobston's Furs

can help you dress the part." Stefan hands you a small scarf emblazoned with a family crest. "This will provide full payment at either establishment. See you tomorrow evening at seven o'clock!"

With that, Amsler disappears into his carriage and it clatters away. Your buckaroos are free to go shopping now or the next day, as they see fit. Refer to the sidebar titled **The Family Crest** whenever they do.

One Suspicious Hunter

When your sodbusters return to wherever they're staying, Jory Helgramme confronts them outside. Read the following passage as Jory pulls a random caballero aside:

A hulking figure, bent over a walking stick, steps from the shadows and grabs you by the lapels. There's passion burning in his eyes and whiskey burning on his breath.

"You fought them before, those unnatural things. I can smell it on you. And you're still standing. So I'm going to give you a warning. Those who cross the Amslers—no matter how slightly—well, eventually they pay the piper. Never seen again.

"The Amslers, they're up to something. I haven't figured it out quite yet. I have got some book learning to do."

He's willing to listen to any intelligence the investigators might have uncovered, but isn't interested in providing any more of his own. Brushing off questions, Helgramme shuffles away into the dark.

• **Jory Helgramme:** See page 123.

Guns Are So Rude

If your dudes and gals agreed to a sprucing-up from Eva the following day, she sends a girl to fetch the posse a few hours before the scheduled dinner. Eva's girls attend to every need (yes, every single one), but most importantly offer new, formal clothing to all of the cowpokes.

When she takes their dirty clothes, Eva puts the heroes' weapons away and does

THE FAMILY CREST

The Amsler family crest is thickly embroidered on the scarf, about the size of a fist. It features three golden deer's heads on a blue field with a white chevron. Showing the scarf to Gregory Hobston or Eva Westberg gives the posse access to pretty much anything it asks for—at your discretion, Marshal, as always—including some "special services" at Westberg's establishment, the Winsome Salon.

Hobston's Furs: Hobston cheerfully outfits the group, although he suggests they ought to get gussied up at the Winsome Salon. If asked, Hobston provides a little bit of background on the Amslers, particularly the "current generation" and how they run the town. He also warns them to stay away from Jory Helgramme, in his words an "old obsessed fool" who causes nothing but trouble for friends of the Amslers.

Winsome Salon: The crest is a signal to Eva as well, letting her know that these dudes are to be watched. Their movements are closely followed by Eva, who does her best to persuade the posse to return immediately before dinner to get ready. She tries to get an accurate feel for how well-armed the party is—and whether they're planning violence—while she provides free baths and washes clothing. When they come back, Eva offers to launder and store their old clothing while they're at dinner, hoping to stealthily disarm the heroes.

Either way, she relays everything she finds out about the posse to the Amslers. This information gives Stefan and Jolene plenty of time to perfect their dastardly plans.

her level best not to reveal she's done so. Any shootist, with a successful Notice roll, senses his smokewagons are misplaced. If anyone raises a stink Eva brushes it off, saying,

If you insist, of course you may have your weapons. But I'll have you know it's simply bad manners to take guns to formal dinners.

Any hero who demands his outfit back is given all his weapons and ammunition without any more fuss. Of course, Eva dispatches a girl to the Amsler Estate immediately with a note listing all the details.

It's Supper Time

When the guests are cleaned and dressed, a carriage arrives to take them to the Amsler Estate. Once there, success on a Notice roll means an hombre senses a pervasive strangeness about the home. Allow a Smarts roll for any cowpoke who's had prior doings with nosferatu or other vampires. With success that hombre correctly notes the lack of natural lighting, as it were, due to heavy shades and shutters covering all the windows.

A young woman—the same who fetched them to Eva's earlier, and who delivered Eva's warning note to Stefan—welcomes the posse at the door. They are escorted to a very formal, but aged, dining room.

Stefan Amsler greets them warmly and introduces his wife, Jolene. Everyone sits down to a sumptuous dinner with polite and scintillating conversation. Stefan Amsler seems a well-traveled man with opinions on many facets of the Weird West—all of which he's willing to discuss at length. You might use this opportunity to drop a few pearls of knowledge concerning your own plots and locations, Marshal, or choose a few players to relate anecdotes using the Interlude rules in *Savage Worlds*.

Hunter's Revenge

This dinner is doomed to be interrupted. While the heroes got

gussied up in their best bibs and tuckers, Helgramme made the final breakthrough and cracked the elder Amsler's code. He wasted no time riding out the estate when he discovered the Amslers' simple yet terrifying secret.

Read the following when all the chit-chat's done and you're ready for the final act to begin, Marshal:

After a delicious dinner, the best you've had in years, but before dessert, your hear a sudden crashing and commotion from somewhere in the house. It's followed by a few sharp thumps.

Stefan smiles faintly and asks, "What on earth could that be?"

The dining room doors crash inward. Helgramme stands in the doorway with a pistol aimed at Stefan's chest. "It's all over for you, Hellspawn!"

Deal out your Action Cards now, Marshal.

Jolene cries out for the party to stop Helgramme, claiming he's delusional. Stefan plays along only if he isn't attacked. If Jory—who fires as soon as he's able—is on target, Stefan shrugs off the wound and rages,

Then this is how it shall be. I welcome it. After all, the dinner wasn't FOR you, it was always going to BE you!

Stefan charges into battle, first slaying Jory Helgramme then turning to face the well-fed posse. When Stefan commits himself to duking it out, Jolene attempts to flee, turning to fight only if cornered—in that case she's a fierce foe. Amsler's loyal servants arrive the following round.

- **Amsler's Minions (2 per hero):** Use Gunman stats in the *Deadlands Marshal's Handbook*. Amsler's minions are armed with shotguns (Range: 12/24/48, Damage: 1-3d6, RoF 1, Shots 1, Shooting +2) and Bowie knives (Damage: Str+d4+1, AP 1).
- **Jolene Amsler:** See page 119.
- **Jory Helgramme:** See page 123.
- **Stefan Amsler:** See page 120.

If Jolene makes it out the back, she's almost sure to get away in the form of a bat or wolf... and return to harass the posse in the future! Either way, when the battle's over Helgramme imparts the knowledge he gained from Amsler's diary. If he's left dying after the fight, Helgramme passes on the book as he shuffles off the mortal coil.

SWEET MEAT

Location: Josephine (Fear Level 3)

Erling "Weasel" Godmundsdottir's tasty sausages have a very special ingredient indeed: "Weasel" has been hunting sasquatches and dragging their bodies to a cabin in the woods near Josephine. There he grinds up the noble creatures to make his coveted links from their flesh. It's up to any curious connoisseurs of cuisine to root out Erling's secret.

A Public Feud

While strolling down Main Street the posse finds Erling and Arnbjorg (see pages 55-56) arguing in the middle of the street. A small crowd has gathered around to witness the unfolding drama. Read the following:

"Thief! You stole my recipe for rosti!"
Arnbjorg shouts.

"That overcooked paste?" counters Erling, *"Who'd want it? You're just jealous of my sausages!"*

"How can I be jealous of a sausage when you don't even tell us what meat it is?"

The crowd gasps.

Heroes who make small-talk with gathered townsfolk can, with a successful Streetwise roll, find out that the contents of the—extremely delicious—Buckhorn sausage have been a source of speculation for months. Meanwhile, the cooks go on bickering. Finally, read the following passages to your group:

Erling declares, "If you can't tell what kind of meat it is, maybe you need to talk to a real cook!" He stomps back inside the Buckhorn Inn and slams the door behind him.

"A real cook? A real cook!" shouts Arnbjorg. "If you folk want to see a real cook, come inside the Leaping Deer!" With that, he spins on his heel and crosses the street to the Leaping Deer Inn, beckoning for you and everyone else to join him.

Leaping Deer Inn

Hungry hombres have their choice of the Leaping Deer or the Buckhorn. Should they choose the former, read this out loud:

The Leaping Deer Inn is lively and full of reg'lar folks, the air thick with cooking smoke and the scent of rich foods. Arnbjorg's mood seems brighter; he and his wife serve the influx of guests cheerfully.

Noticing the posse, Arnbjorg is so eager to impress new guests he offers them half price on all their meals. As he interacts with the cowpokes, he might relay some of the town's history as part of a welcoming spiel. Only mention of Erling or the Buckhorn darkens his mood, though not for long. He says,

No one knows what type of meat Erling uses. He prepares his sausages outside of town, and he only hunts at night. Now doesn't that seem odd to you? With all the wolves roaming the hills around here, you'd think hunting at night would be quite dangerous.

Arnbjorg doesn't have any other facts to relate, but he offers a full range of desserts and can talk all day about cooking techniques.

Buckhorn Inn

Should the posse head over to Buckhorn, they find the mood there a bit more dour. Read this to your group:

As you go in the front door, people are leaving the restaurant, complaining

bitterly about the lack of the featured dish. The hostess tries to mend fences, saying, "Erling has already left to prepare more, so please come back for your Buckhorn breakfast tomorrow!"

The hostess has no useful information to impart to curious cowpokes asking after Erling, but brightly suggests that they might come back for breakfast in the morning and talk to Erling themselves.

Should the posse desire it, a cowpoke with Tracking can pick up Erling's trail from where he left the city. Fresh snowfall imparts a +4 modifier to the first mile's Tracking roll, the sausage maker's boots leaving impressions that are easy to follow.

For the second and third miles, the tracks' direction changes abruptly and often, usually near some rocky outcropping or stream. At these spots Erling tried to hide his trail, so Tracking rolls gain no bonus for the last two miles of pursuit. Erling may be sneaky but he's also not used to being followed anymore, so he has gotten a bit sloppy. Luckily for him, the rough, forested, and hilly terrain does a lot of the job for him.

That Smells Delicious!

A scant three miles outside Josephine, the posse smells a savory, meaty scent wafting on the breeze. No Tracking roll is needed to follow the smoke back to a small cabin tucked into the hills, but a Stealth roll might be wise if any players suggest it. Make an opposed Notice roll for Erling, who is always considered an active guard at his cabin.

If he senses intruders, Erling bursts out of the cabin as they approach. Wearing a bloody butcher's apron, he lowers a shotgun and fires!

- **Erling Godmundsdottir:** Wild Card. Use Soldier stats in the *Deadlands*

Marshal's Handbook. He's armed with a double-barrel shotgun (Range: 12/24/48, Damage: 1-3d6, RoF 1 or 2, Shots 2, Shooting +2), and has four spare shells in his pocket.

The Weasel Turns Mean

Erling doesn't fight to the death, but rather surrenders if he suffers one or more wounds. Inside the cabin, the posse finds a grisly sight. Large, furry body parts lie strewn about, along with brown pelts and the gear one would expect primitive hunters to carry. When confronted, Erling confesses to hunting the noble sasquatches for their meat. He claims the first time he tasted sasquatch flesh was a matter of life or death, but he couldn't seem to shake his desire for it afterward.

Once the talking is done, read the following:

It's hard for you to get any more out of Erling. As he speaks, his features distort, growing thicker and wider. His teeth and fingers sharpen and elongate, his whole body growing more massive and sprouting black fur as he slips his bonds. He's some kind o' big, mean critter!

Erling has become the sasquatches' mortal enemy, turning into a wendigo right before the posse's eyes! Make a Guts check for every cowpoke who witnesses this and then deal Action Cards, Marshal.

- **Erling the Wendigo (1):** Use Wendigo stats in the *Deadlands Marshal's Handbook*.

After the battle is over, the posse is left with the difficult decision of what to tell the townsfolk of Josephine, if anything. One thing's for sure—Arnbjorg doesn't mourn the loss of his chief rival, no matter what explanation is given.

Hope Falls

Sometimes a city is founded on its chosen spot because it's just the only possible place to do so. Surrounded by dust basins and dry land, Hope Falls is one of those places. In fact, it's no less than a pristine oasis. Taking its name from the waterfalls that feed said oasis, Hope Falls is an ideal place for tuckered-out hombres to soothe their saddle sores before they hit the dusty trail again.

Water alone does not a city make, so it wasn't until a large vein of copper was found that the former oasis became a boomtown. With the flood of miners came the usual accoutrements—saloons, brothels, and crime. It wasn't long until

Hope Falls was on the road to becoming another brewing den of Fear in the Weird West. When prospectors struck a vein of ghost rock nearby, the people of Hope Falls felt their hopes rise—they expected to see the miners and money flowing through their town increase, even if the criminal element might increase along with it.

Problem was another town, Sheltonsville, which sprung up nearer to the ghost rock vein—the expected population boom happened there instead. The Bayou Vermilion rail line promised to Hope Falls never materialized, instead heading to the ghost rock and Sheltonsville. Most of the miners went



GHOST TOWNS

there too. In a short time, Hope Falls went from a thriving community of thousands to just under 800 people.

Some miners stuck it out for the copper, hoping that its abundance would make up for the price difference with the more lucrative ghost rock. Others wish for

the ghost rock vein to dry up, bringing people and money back to Hope Falls. There's a single ray of hope, in the form of the Hope Falls Power Generator, but it's a thin one. Few can deny that at this rate, it looks like Hope Falls may soon be nothing more than a ghost town.

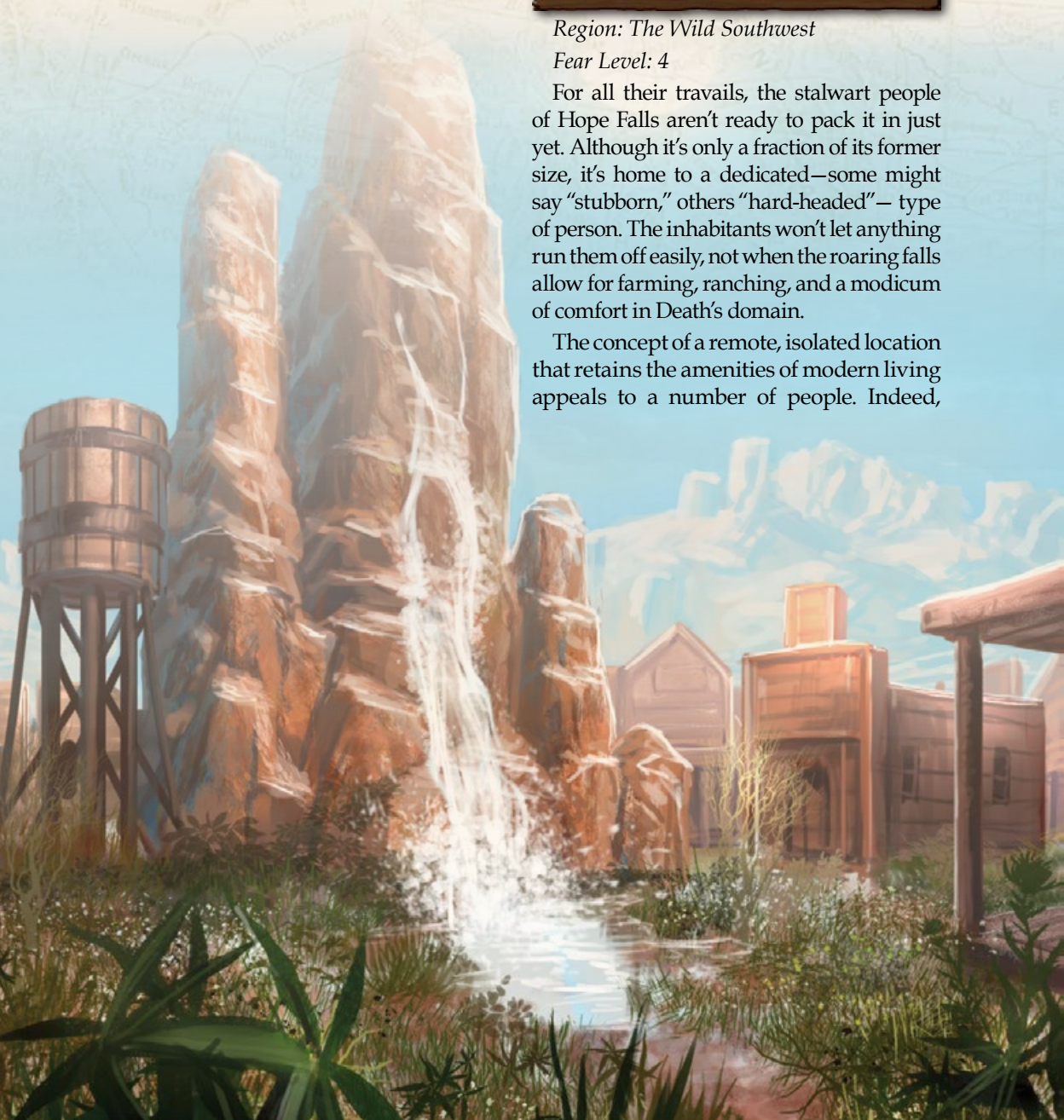
THE CITY NOW

Region: The Wild Southwest

Fear Level: 4

For all their travails, the stalwart people of Hope Falls aren't ready to pack it in just yet. Although it's only a fraction of its former size, it's home to a dedicated—some might say “stubborn,” others “hard-headed”—type of person. The inhabitants won't let anything run them off easily, not when the roaring falls allow for farming, ranching, and a modicum of comfort in Death's domain.

The concept of a remote, isolated location that retains the amenities of modern living appeals to a number of people. Indeed,



recent years have seen a small upswing in the number of residents, including the prominent inventor Aldo Derringer.

Aldo is a distant cousin of Henry Derringer, creator of the palm pistol that bears his name. A scientist rather than a gunsmith, Aldo revels in the attention his name garners. The locals are more than happy to have a “celebrity” as an attraction in Hope Falls, even if he’s known as a bit of an ornery cuss.

Aldo dreamed up and built the Hope Falls Power Generator that promises to change life as the locals know it—should he ever get it functioning. Aldo’s creation rivals the new power station in Niagara Falls, New York, but runs more efficiently and at a lower cost. The electricity provided by Aldo’s roaring turbines is one of the more tangible benefits of life in Hope Falls.

The facility employs a number of locals, making them feel indebted to their local mad scientist. He’s outfitted many of the locals with electric lights and fans at little or no cost—after all, they still pay Aldo for the electricity to run them. Currently they’re building lines to carry electric power all the way to Sheltonsville!

Many feel Derringer and the plant deflect some of the bad press about the city’s troubles. Rumors of a strange mechanical monster that walks like a man and abducts the unwary pop up about once a month or so. Tales are also whispered about the dangers of electric power, with its deadly ability to fry a man who grasps a “live wire.” Most locals just shrug and dismiss these stories as the product of jealous rivals from other towns (read: Sheltonsville).

The city is hospitable enough to travelers—maybe a little too much so. People go out of their way to offer a warm handshake or an inviting smile. A posse arriving in town is met with genuine curiosity and lots of friendly suggestions as to why they should stay. Abandoned

POINTS OF INTEREST

Here are some of the best-known and most popular places in Hope Falls, as shown on the nearby map.

“Boltholes”: These secret entrances to a network of pneumatic tunnels under the city are known only to Aldo Derringer and the mysterious Leonard Cave. They provide access to Derringer’s secret workshop under the Power Station.

Children’s Dream Toy Emporium: Here the unsavory—and highly unethical—Jonas Fellbane peddles cheap knock-offs of Derringer’s creations as toys for children.

Hope Falls Power Station: Here the Hope River’s might is used to power turbines which, in turn, provide electricity to Hope Falls—and soon to Sheltonsville!

Lost Angels Mission: From this makeshift church Missionary Paulson preaches the word of Grimme.

Power Lines: These lines stretch north out of town, across the desert, arrowing toward Sheltonsville. The work crews are supervised by lineman Edmund Crier.

Security Office: Olivia “Liv” Turner, while not the local marshal, is in charge of keeping the peace. A close ally of Aldo Derringer, she does her work from this office, which is equipped with several jail cells.

lots with crumbling houses ring the outskirts of the town, easily had for a cheap price. Given how green the area is in comparison to the drab surroundings, that could be a very tempting offer.

THE LOCALS

The folk of Hope Falls embody the spirit of the rugged frontiersman. Above all, they honestly believe in their home and want it to prosper. Any suggestion or event that breaks their idealized notions of their city is met with polite denial.

Aldo Derringer

Hope Falls' most famous resident is also its most reluctant celebrity. Aldo has long been obsessed with proving himself a skilled inventor and stepping out of the shadow of his more famous cousin, yet he abhors the limelight. Never without his trademark cigar, the inventor sports expensive, stylish clothing. To Aldo, fashion is as important as ethics are meaningless. The only things that really matter to him are his work and his next meal, in that order. Truth be told, he can be a bit mean-spirited at times.

Aldo is also a bit paranoid, refusing to go anywhere without a few members of his personal security team. He's installed numerous "boltholes" around the city, a system of pneumatic tunnels only he knows the locations of. Any of these tubes whisks him back to the safety of his lab, none the worse for wear.

- **Aldo Derringer:**
See page 122.

Jonas Fellbane

Jonas is one of the people who have benefited the most from Aldo's presence in the town. After a number of Aldo's discarded blueprints found their way into Jonas' possession, Jonas used his incomplete knowledge of the schematics to engineer inferior copies, which he sells as toys. When a child buys a toy from his Children's Dream Toy Emporium, the joyful light in her eyes matches the greed burning in Jonas'.

Most of the toys are animatronic in some fashion, running on a sliver of ghost rock. Although Jonas was capable of replicating the original function to some extent, his skill pales in comparison to Aldo's. For Aldo's part, he takes one look at the gaunt, pale, always-sweating Jonas and dismisses him entirely. If Jonas is able to make some money on far inferior copies of Aldo's work, Aldo couldn't care less.

• Jonas Fellbane:

Use Townsfolk stats in the *Deadlands Marshal's Handbook*, with the Hindrance Greedy (Major), and Repair d8.



Edmund Crier

Edmund is the “lineman” for the grand civic project to convey power from Hope Falls to the town of Sheltonsville. His weathered skin reflects a lifetime of hard work, proving this kind of thing is right up his alley. Well, at least the work part of it, anyway. Dealing with saboteurs, thieves, highwaymen, and all sorts of outlaws was never his cup of tea. Unfortunately, his job as head-lineman-in-charge marries what he’s good at to what he’d rather not have to deal with.

What makes matters worse is Edmund feels completely ignored by Aldo Derringer, unless the inventor is berating him for something. Aldo’s moved on to his next experiment, and the civic project he dreamt up barely reaches his notice. The fact that it could be vital to keeping the town alive also escapes Aldo completely. So all the grave responsibility is directly on Edmund’s shoulders, something he hasn’t been wearing too well of late.

- **Edmund Crier:** Use Townsfolk stats in the *Deadlands Marshal’s Handbook*, adding Repair d10, Knowledge (Electrical Systems) d8, and the Quirk (Wrings hands nervously) Hindrance.

Carlos Perez Alonso

Carlos isn’t new to town but he’s not a native, either. Most of the locals treat him almost as one of their own, or at least accept the loud, large Mexican as part of the scenery. He tells sweeping and grandiose tall tales, and rollicking stories of his term in Santa Anna’s army. Carlos is affectionate and boisterous, and anyone coming near one of the town’s two remaining saloons finds him outside regaling residents and travelers alike with his stories.

Carlos has been a little more vocal lately in his support of Santa Anna, giving public speeches listing the general’s virtues, and campaigning to get a few of Aldo’s

scientific advances into Santa Anna’s hands. For the most part he’s regarded as harmless, although Missionary Paulson has cross words for Alonso whenever the latter speaks of Santa Anna’s “rightful claim” to California.

Too bad no one has ever taken a look through Alonso’s personal belongings—they’d find less in Alonso’s past to link him to Santa Anna, and far more tying him to Reverend Grimme. In truth Carlos is a member of the Church of Lost Angels, and a believer of Grimme’s word and faith. He stands ready to claim Hope Falls for Grimme when the time is right.

- **Carlos Perez Alonso:** Wild Card. Use Guardian Angel stats in the *Deadlands Marshal’s Handbook*.

Missionary Paulson

Though Missionary Paulson has been in town less than a month, he’s already caused quite a stir. Buying a vacant building and turning it into a church, this devotee of Rev. Grimme and the Church of Lost Angels has been very visible. On street corners he preaches the word of Grimme insistently, with his “helpers”—actually Guardian Angels in plain garb—handing out prayer tracts. Although most in the city dislike Paulson, they’ve yet to find a good reason to run him out.

Paulson and Carlos Perez Alonso always seem at odds with each other. Truth is the entire thing is an act, their enmity false. It just wouldn’t do for the townsfolk to realize how many of Lost Angels’ faithful are taking up residence in Hope Falls. In the meantime both are hoping to get their hands on Aldo’s advanced weaponry. Doing so would garner high praise from Grimme and transfer a good deal of lethal armament to Lost Angels.

- **Missionary Paulson:** Use Cult Leader stats in the *Deadlands Marshal’s Handbook*.



Olivia “Liv” Turner

Olivia—or “Liv,” as she’s known to her friends—came to Hope Falls with Aldo, the head of his personal security force. She pulls back her hair and takes care to sharpen her soft features in order to better represent him. It wouldn’t do for someone to glance at the 5’11” brunette and think Derringer had hired a lady instead of a specialist.

Olivia’s a consummate professional, commanding Derringer’s security forces with skill and respect. As the town lost more and more people, Olivia shrewdly co-opted the local lawmen into Derringer’s employ. In actuality, they’re more loyal to her than to him. Now the

de facto law of Hope Falls, she makes sure everything stays safe and, more importantly, ensures Aldo is unmolested.

A less scrupulous bodyguard could make an easy living selling off Derringer’s discarded blueprints, but not Liv. She took a vow to protect her boss, and she aims to keep it.

- **Olivia Turner:** Wild Card. Use Rail Warrior stats in the *Deadlands Marshal’s Handbook*, replacing the Hindrances with Vow (Protect Derringer). Add a Bullet Proof Vest to her Gear.

Leonard Cave

Leonard Cave used to be the local Marshal, and one of the most dedicated lawmen in the West. He’d forgone women, family, and even friends in order to remain “beholden to no one” as he would say. He was never seen to touch a drop of liquor, was polite but firm at all times, and always available for any emergency, big or small.

The past tense is used because that type of clean living is liable to get a man killed in the Weird West, and Leonard Cave was no exception. Caught flat-footed by a sneaky hombre who shot from underneath his poncho, Cave’s death was avenged by Olivia Turner. Only problem with his death is that the body up and disappeared from the gunfight, before the undertaker could even measure him up for the coffin.

Cave’s face featured a distinctive scar passing from the left of his nose to the top of his lip. Maybe that’s why, every so often, a local thinks they’ve seen him walking the city at night. Must be some other scarred fella with a penchant for somnambulism.

- **Leonard Cave:** See page 123.

TALK O' THE TOWN

A number of story opportunities wait in Hope Falls, ready to jump out and shout “Boo!” at passers-by. Here’s a story seed and a trio of Savage Tales to get things moving.

Don't Let the Lightnin' Man Getcha!

The Hope Falls Power Generator promises huge technological advancements, but superstition reigns supreme. According to the fevered tales of locals, electric bolts might leap across the open air to strike a man dead, travel through the earth to set buildings alight, or hide in an otherwise innocent-looking bucket of water. No amount of rhetoric can disabuse them of their odd notions, nor stop them spreading the hair-raising rumors.

Through the dark magic of the Reckoning, tall tales of electricity’s dangers have given rise to a malicious creature of living voltage called a Lightnin’ Man. It can leave a man blackened and smoking with no visible cause. Between it and Hope Falls’ rampant gremlins (see the *Deadlands Marshal's Handbook*), freelancers hired by Aldo Derringer to solve the mystery have their hands full.

- **Lightnin’ Man:** See page 117.

BETTER THAN HUMAN

Location: Hope Falls (Fear Level 4)

Almost as prolific as the help wanted posters in Hope Falls are **MISSING** posters showcasing the distinctively scarred face of Leonard Cave. Talking to a local—or making a successful Streetwise roll—gets at some of the story behind these posters. It always sounds about the same:

POSTDILUVIAN CULTISTS

If your game is set after the events of *Deadlands: The Flood*, Marshal, you might be wondering why a Church of Lost Angels missionary or a loyalist of Santa Anna would even bother to persist, given that their leaders have been swept away and deposed. Well, faith and fanaticism are funny things, amigo.

After the Great Deluge wipes out half of Lost Angels, swallowing up Grimme and his inner circle like the proverbial whale swallowed Jonah, the church goes on. In fact, it’s a little more in accord with the “good” word now, since a heap of pure evil’s been removed from behind the scenes. If this is the case in your campaign, assume Missionary Paulson’s plan is to try to reclaim material ownership of Lost Angels from the Wasatch Rail Co. The more advanced weapons he can grab, the better off the church will be.

With Santa Anna’s ultimate downfall also complete, change Carlos Perez Alonso’s loyalties to Emperor Maximillian instead of Santa Anna. He constantly extols the virtues of the rugged and implacable French Foreign Legion. It’s still a sham, just one that’s more in line with the times.

Leonard Cave, bless his soul if he really is dead, was a hero to this town—no less than a hero. He didn’t deserve what happened to him.

Festus Dooley, now there was an ornery cuss. He came into town with a chip on his shoulder. It seems his cousin had been working on the power line to Sheltonsville, and an accident caused him to get fried alive by electricity. Festus

GHOST TOWNS

Dooley figured he'd take out his sorrow and frustration on Mr. Derringer.

Leonard Cave, always making peace, tried to talk the man down. Dooley shot Cave with a holdout gun hidden in his poncho. Liv Turner heard the commotion and intervened, gunning Dooley down in the street.

When the smoke cleared, Dooley was dead and Cave's body was missing. We searched abandoned buildings, alleys, under sidewalks, everywhere, but nobody found him. A lot of folks say he's still alive, somewhere...protecting Hope Falls from the shadows.

The Hole Truth

The truth is sometimes a little more gruesome in cases like this. Cave wasn't killed by the bullet that tore a big hole through his innards. Fact is, he wasn't killed at all. He crawled away from the fight, hoping to make it to the local sawbones as Liv Turner and her men closed in with guns blazing. Instead, Cave accidentally uncovered one of Aldo's boltholes. Falling

into the tube, he was sucked into Aldo's labs in a bloody *fwooooosh!*, where he landed unconscious on the floor.

Aldo came across the body in his lab, and was struck with inspiration. It was clear no one had any idea what became of Cave, and he would have died anyway, had Aldo not intervened. Most of all, what subject would be better suited for what Derringer had in mind? He replaced most of Cave's body with pneumatic parts, driving it all with a ghost rock engine, hoping to create an Augmented Man—a bodyguard more loyal and powerful than any human being.

Derringer had no idea that only Dr. Gash's X-19 formula (as described in *The 1880 Smith & Robards Catalog*) could possibly make such augmentations function on a human host. And even worse, Cave's psyche didn't come back—a manitou came back in his place, animating the pneumatic parts with evil magic. For a few moments Aldo thought the operation had been a smashing success... until Cave jumped off the table and started smashing all the equipment.



In a rage he broke out of Aldo's workshop, nearly killing the scientist in the process. Cave's deviously intelligent, but driven more by instinct than anything else. Now his instincts tell him to kill. He stalks the streets of Hope Falls at night, using Aldo's pneumatic tubes to cross the city in the blink of an eye, seeking ghost rock to fuel his unlife and fomenting Fear in the process. His focus on victims who have ghost rock adds an extra dose of fright in a city so dependent on the New Science for its livelihood.

Cave Sightings

Getting the posse involved in this one's not too hard if they're ever out after dark. Cave tries to catch someone alone, and targets hombres likely to be carrying ghost rock—mad scientists, miners, and such. He pops out from a bolthole, grapples his prey, and drags them in with him.

Cave might also go for a quick smash and grab, either while the posse is sleeping or has foolishly left some device unguarded back in their room. Either way, when the posse notices their gear has the ghost rock ripped out of it—or awakens during the robbery—Cave runs off to hide, and tries to ambush any pursuers.

- **Leonard Cave:** See page 123.

Into the Tubes

Even though a successful Notice or Tracking roll tells a cowpoke where Cave went, a successful Lockpicking roll is needed to open an entrance to Aldo's underground pneumatic tube system. Once inside, a novice user is typically sucked directly into Derringer's secret workshop under the power plant, unharmed. Skilled users—or those who succeed on a Smarts roll at -4—can direct their travel through the tubes to points within the city as they choose. If an inquisitive soul takes 1d6 hours' time to practice using the tubes, and then succeeds on a Smarts roll, she's considered a "skilled" user thereafter.

The pneumatic system can be shut down in Aldo's workshop, allowing single-file travel through the rather tight copper cylinders. Navigating the dips, twists, and turns can be treacherous. This means complex movement, like fighting, is more difficult. When a novice user of the tunnels makes a Fighting or Shooting roll, have them subtract 2 from the result. Cave is a skilled user.

Aftermath

Finding Leonard Cave isn't easy (it's up to you how and when the dogged trackers find him, Marshal), but defeating him means the compadres can grant him some peace at last. A successful Weird Science roll allows a hero to recognize the design and workmanship—particularly the use of ghost rock boilers to power small electrical turbines—as something that might come from Aldo Derringer.

Confronting Aldo about his role in Leonard Cave's disappearance and transformation is possible, but likely makes the posse somewhat unwelcome in Hope Falls. Olivia Turner brooks no harassment of her boss. For Aldo's part, he simply states he "forgot he tried to fix Cave"—true, given his Absent-Minded nature—and dismisses the issue.

EVIL IN TOYLAND

Location: Hope Falls (Fear Level 4)

Jonas Fellbane has never concerned himself with the longevity of the toys he sells. His goal is to make a quick buck off any parents who allow their children to get close enough to see the windows of his shop. If he weren't so greedy, maybe he'd use better materials or even make his own instead of copying Aldo's failed prototypes. Regardless of quality, each toy proudly contains a "Children's Dream Toy Emporium" emblem on the back.

To be fair, it's not easy to take blueprints of fighting machines and tanks and render them in miniature, harmless enough to be sold as toys. Proving the point, even Fellbane has failed to do so.

Demonic Whispers

There's a problem with Jonas' toys far more sinister than their origin. They're powered by ghost rock, and over time have gained the attention of manitous looking to cause trouble among the younger set. Given independent motion, the manitous take up residence in the toys and whisper to their young owners as they sleep about the horrors of the Hunting Grounds and the ruin of humanity. Soon the children are possessed of malicious imagination and precocious energy, at times attacking their families or friends. Meanwhile, the manitou-ridden toys get up to mischief of their own—which is usually blamed on the child.

Quality Control

This encounter can get started when the posse witnesses a few strange events around the city, such as sabotage and vandalism, or sees local children throwing screaming fits and tantrums for no apparent reason.

"I just want another toy right NOW!" shrieks the young 'un.

At each scene, a Notice roll reveals one of Fellbane's toys prominently held by the child, discarded amidst the wreckage of a livery stable, and so forth. Inspecting a toy shows that each is equipped with a tiny ghost rock boiler, which is now blackened and empty. Every one of Fellbane's toys bears his tell-tale emblem on its back.

Eventually this could lead to a confrontation with Jonas, if the posse wants to sort things out, but Fellbane angrily denies any wrongdoing. Should the posse get overly hostile with Jonas, the manitoys take action. Defending their maker, the manitou-propelled toys spring to life and attack everyone besides their maker.

- **Manitoys (2 per hero):** See page 118.

POWER CORRUPTS

Location: Hope Falls (Fear Level 4)

When the posse hits town, they see an odd twist on the typical wanted poster. Scattered throughout Hope Falls are **HELP WANTED** signs posted by Edmund Crier. Crier is looking for hardy folk skilled at security and protection—in other words, the heroes. If shootists don't respond to the signs, it's only a matter of time before Crier approaches them with a job offer.

The Story So Far

Missionary Paulson has his Guardian Angels hiring the lowest-down outlaws and saddletramps they can, putting guns in their hands, and pointing them at the new power lines. He hopes to halt construction on the lines and bankrupt Aldo Derringer. Paulson plans to offer a large sum for several of Aldo's military inventions, with a sizeable tax paid to the city. The city officials—some of whom are already plotting with Paulson—would then put pressure on Aldo to complete the deal.

A Line in the Sand

When Crier presents his case to the group he explains the entire situation, whether in service of persuasion or merely to inform. He says,

The need for these power lines betwixt Hope Falls and Sheltonsville is desperate, friends. The city needs this to survive. But I can't do it alone, just me and my crew.

Mr. Derringer's already hired everyone who can pull a trigger, but he's loathe to send them out along the line, leaving himself wide open. Certain folks have got it in for him, since he's the big bug 'round these parts. That's the way it is.

But I too am constantly under threat from a variety of attacks—both human and...otherwise. I'll pay you handsomely to ride out with the next crew and keep

an eye on them. And, of course...do what it takes to keep them safe.

Crier pays in copper at the fairly decent wage of \$15 per regulator per day. He also offers the posse free room and board in one of Hope Falls' abandoned houses for as long as they're under contract.

Mojave Linemen

If the posse takes the job, they ride out the next day with Crier, six linemen on horseback, and just as many pack mules. The mules are loaded down with tools, cable, and equipment to hook up to the next relay, roughly 40 miles out of town.

Crier leads this crew personally, warning the posse that the past few weeks have seen more attacks than usual. He openly ponders if someone could be coordinating these encounters, although he admits that would be very difficult.

- **Edmund Crier:** Use Townsfolk stats in the *Deadlands Marshal's Handbook*, adding Repair d10, Knowledge (Electrical Systems) d8, and the Quirk (Wrings hands nervously) Hindrance.
- **Line Crew (6):** Use Townsfolk stats in the *Deadlands Marshal's Handbook*, but add Repair d6.
- **Mules (6):** See *Savage Worlds*.

Worse Than Rattlesnakes

As the posse heads towards the relay, draw for encounters as usual, using the Wild Southwest encounter table (in the *Deadlands Marshal's Handbook*). On the second day of travel, they're stalked by a rather large band of hired guns—assassins, to be exact.

The bad guys line both rims of a narrow canyon, waiting for the hapless heroes and the line crew to ride into firing range. Edges such as Danger Sense and Scout come in handy here. Otherwise watchful heroes receive a Notice roll (−3) to detect the well-hidden attackers before

they open fire. With success a hero notes some small clue that all's not right—a bird taking flight or a rustle of grass—while a raise grants a glimpse of a readied weapon clenched in white knuckles atop the canyon rim.

Deal Action Cards as soon as the ambush begins; heroes who failed the Notice roll are surprised and don't get a card the first round.

- **Hired Guns (3 per hero):** Use Outlaw stats in the *Deadlands Marshal's Handbook*. They're armed with El Cheapo Winchesters and single-action revolvers.

If any of the outlaws are captured and interrogated—with a successful Test of Wills—they reveal the name of the man who hired them, Fred Jenkins. Sure enough, ol' Fred turns out to be one of Missionary Paulson's "helpers" back in Hope Falls. Of course, Fred's actually a Guardian Angel.

Root 'Em Out

If the posse decides to follow the trail of the Guardian Angel to its source, they have a chance to put the Church of Lost Angels out of business in Hope Falls. But Missionary Paulson is a canny sort who always tries to look like the mild lamb even when he's planning the wolf's work, so to speak, so he's not easy to catch out.

Paulson is horribly ineffective in a fight, usually attempting to do nothing other than get away. As for his Guardian Angels, there are eight of them including Fred, and when the chips are down they put up more of a fight.

- **Guardian Angels (8):** See the *Deadlands Marshal's Handbook*.

If a scrap transpires, it draws the attention of Olivia Turner and some of Derringer's security team. They're only too happy to take Paulson into custody, furious at his attempt to manipulate the town.

Rulamer

Rulamer's history began when a French ship became utterly lost in the Great Maze. After several days of wandering and close calls in the narrow sea channels, the captain of the *Seigneur Chanceux* was relieved to finally spy what he believed was a channel to the open sea. Unfortunately, the next thing his crew saw was a California Maze Dragon—and unlike the miraculous channel, it was no mirage.

The wreck of the *Seigneur Chanceux* killed nearly three-quarters of the ship's crew, as well as its captain, who went down with the ship. Luck remained with a few, who managed to put a longboat in the roiling waters and row a short distance away from the sinking vessel.

The refuge they found—a natural harbor with gentle slopes reaching up from the beaches to a wooded area atop the mesa—was perfect for settlement. Initial attempts to sail back out of the area led to difficulties and setbacks, though, making the sailors gun-shy. But they settled in for the long haul, and began to make the best of their situation. A few weeks later, a rudimentary settlement was in place, and the most persistent sailors had found a navigable route back out into the Maze.

Over time, the tiny settlement expanded with the addition of other shipwrecked seamen and random stragglers lost in the Maze. Given the relatively low elevation



of the settlement, expansion came with bridges leading over to the tops of other, nearby mesas. The predominantly French locals noted the city had “streets of water,” or in their own tongue, “*Rue l’mer*.” A derivative of this name, Rulamer, stuck around as the city became a hidden port... and a den of pirates!

THE CITY NOW

Region: Great Maze

Price Modifier: x5

Fear Level: 4

Rulamer has grown into a significant pirate harbor in the past few years. A combination of dangerous currents and underwater hazards make it the perfect hiding spot for skippers who know how to avoid the rocks. The rushing sea currents also drive schools of fish into Rulamer’s harbor and prevent their escape, making fishing an expedient way to provide most of the port’s food. With its innovative water filtration system, Rulamer supports nearly 200 people, which borders on extravagant for a Maze settlement—one that isn’t owned by Warlord Kang, anyway.

The population consists mostly of Maze pirates and fishermen, some rice farmers, and the people who provide all the entertainment by working in Rulamer’s saloons, Fan Tan parlors, brothels, dance halls, theaters, and such. Due to the difficulty of reaching Rulamer in one piece, the transient population tends to remain few.

There’s little in the way of true local government. Instead the port is ruled by local crime bosses, and they make or break the rules as they go along. There’s no such thing as law enforcement as far as the public is concerned, with even the Texas Rangers and Agents run out of town. The only common law—more of a guideline, really—is when the city

POINTS OF INTEREST

Here are some of the most prominent places in Rulamer, as shown on the nearby map.

Anchor Saloon: By far the most popular drinking establishment in town. Sailors, soldiers, pirates, toughs, merchants, and strongarms mix here, and sometimes mix it up.

Brun’s Water Station: Here Brun’s Boys sell their overpriced wares and house their large, ghost-rock-powered water distiller. Brun Desmarais oversees operations from a house next door.

Renard Imports & Exports: Sournois Renard runs this business, which is little more than a front for fencing stolen goods and running smuggling operations.

Rulamer Harbor: Small but deep, and equipped with several wharfs, this harbor normally shelters 20 or more vessels at a time.

Webbe’s Estate: Bedivere Webbe makes his home in this building perched on a high, broken column of mesa overlooking the town.

is attacked, everyone defends it. It’s not like there’s anywhere to flee to, so this is more out of necessity than choice.

A strong Chinese influence has taken hold, with rice now grown in the few areas around town that can support it. That and fish make up the majority of the food in the town. As with other places in the Maze, food’s still scarce enough that everyone stays peckish and always on the lookout for their next meal. Fresh water is provided by a purifier controlled by a notably ornery local gang known as Brun’s Boys, and it’s going at a premium price—\$5 per glass.

Pirates who know how to reach Rulamer use it to unload “excess cargo” (which is to say stolen goods) before putting into larger ports like Shan Fan. Tucked into the little-traveled recesses of the Maze, it’s avoided the notice of all the major fleets patrolling the area, remaining a safe harbor for the time being.

Folks looking to book passage do so at their own risk. Information on chartering ships, along with statistics for a whole passel of vessels, can be found in the *Deadlands: The Flood Player’s Guide*, available free at www.peginc.com.

THE LOCALS

Rulamer’s average inhabitant is a shiftless, lowdown, dirty, rotten brigand—and those are the nicest ones. There are a few cutthroats who stand out among the rest. Most people avoid attracting attention to themselves, as it’s the safest way to survive here.

Bedivere Webbe

One of the two major gang leaders in town, Webbe is the more reluctant, honorable one. He’s a crafty fighter more than a brute, something that carries over into his strategies. Standing just over six feet tall, his long, curly red hair is his signature feature. He carries himself like a leader, so many people instinctively treat him as such. Finesse and subtlety are his marks in trade. In most dealings, Webbe finds a way to come out on top.

Webbe was an English sailor whose vessel was shipwrecked in the Maze on its way to British Columbia and its vast, recently uncovered reserves of ghost rock. The waterlogged Webbe found Rulamer by blind luck. He saw potential, slowly maneuvering himself into a key position of power. Now he’s the town’s primary fence for ill-gotten booty. As

such, he’s also a conduit for most of the stolen goods exported from Rulamer.

Webbe learned the French martial art of *savate* from one of the city founders. Thanks to this useful skill, he’s found himself leading a number of the thugs he once routinely out-boxed in street fights. He turns a blind eye to most of their activities, so long as they avoid human trafficking, which Webbe finds rather distasteful. After all, we did say the Brit’s got his principles, Marshal.

- **Bedivere Webbe:** Use Martial Artist (Superior) stats in the *Deadlands Marshal’s Handbook*, but add the Celestial Kung Fu (Drunken Style), Celestial Kung Fu (Tan Tui), and Feet of Fury (Spin Kick) Edges, and the Code of Honor Hindrance. Because the trapping is *savate*, his attacks are a combination of kicks and boxing techniques.

Millicent “Masher Milli” Schork

At a glance, Millicent Schork the look of a tomboy about her, and an hombre might be tempted to dismiss her as a threat. It doesn’t pay to judge a book by its cover, as she’s one of the toughest salts in all of Rulamer. Most of the gangs know not to mess with her, but that doesn’t stop them from goading newcomers into trying. Many a sailor’s first night in Rulamer has ended with him face down after taking one of “Masher Milli’s” feared right hooks to the kisser.

She might as well be made of steel, as she’s also one of the best Maze navigators in all of California. If there’s a reason to go anywhere, Milli can get you there and back again. She not only knows the waterways and some of the land routes, but she also has intimate knowledge of the local Maze dragons’ nesting and feeding habits.

Milli’s customers include some of the local rice paddies and the infrequent treasure hunter, though she takes on anyone with enough money—double the usual fees for chartering a vessel in the Great Maze.

- **Millicent Schork:** Wild Card. Use Maze Pirate stats in the *Deadlands Marshal's Handbook*, but add Fighting d10, replace the Edges with the Captain, Cannoneer, and Martial Arts Edges, and replace the Hindrances with Wanted (Minor).

Brun Desmarais

Desmarais is one of the few French sailors who crewed the *Seigneur Chanceux* and still lives in Rulamer, the rest having died or moved on in the years since its founding. As such, Brun was only a cabin boy, but his status as one of the men who survived the wreck buoys him. This reputation led to him being considered a lot tougher than he is, and his bully tactics have kept that reputation intact. It doesn't hurt that his crooked nose and matted brown hair sit on top of a massive, nearly seven-foot-tall frame.

Brun's Boys are pure malice and threat, pushing their way into every vice the city can offer. They follow their leader more out of fear than respect.

Desmarais prefers it that way, as he has no idea how to actually lead anyone. His usual plan of attack is brute force, and if that doesn't work the first time,

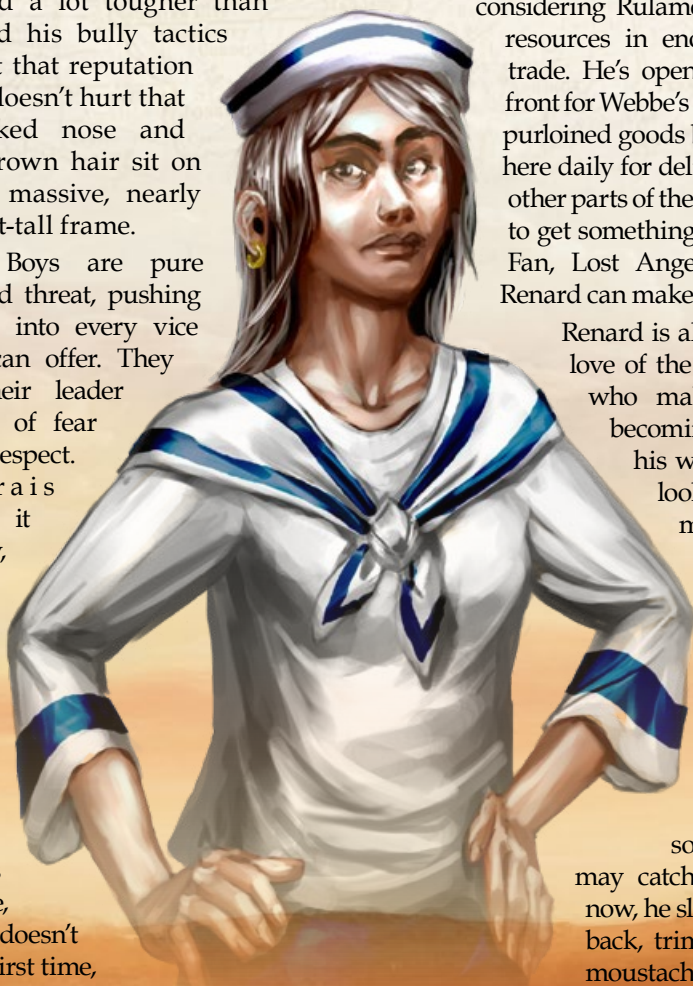
he slams it harder. This has carried down to every member of his organization, who have begun to realize they might be missing out by being on Desmarais' team instead of Webbe's, despite Brun's ownership of the town's only water purifier—and the loyalty of a couple scientists who maintain it.

- **Brun Desmarais:** Wild Card. Use Outlaw stats in the *Deadlands Marshal's Handbook*, but add the Brawny and Reputation Edges and the Greedy (Major) Hindrance.

Sournois Renard

Renard ostensibly runs an import/export house in Rulamer, which is laughable considering Rulamer has no natural resources in enough quantity to trade. He's openly known as the front for Webbe's fencing operation, purloined goods being dropped off here daily for delivery or pickup in other parts of the Maze. If you need to get something in or out of Shan Fan, Lost Angels, or elsewhere, Renard can make it happen.

Renard is also known for his love of the ladies, those few who make it into town becoming the subjects of his wiles. Rakish good looks and a devil-may-care attitude to courtship has won over many a passer-through. It's also left a string of angry husbands, boyfriends, and fiancés behind, something that may catch up to him. For now, he slicks his black hair back, trims his pencil-thin moustache, and turns on





Without charts showing the precise location of the jagged rocks hiding just under the water's surface, the location of dangerous currents, and sudden turns, approaching vessels stand a good chance of being smashed to flinders before they reach the pirates' cove due to the dangerous series of canyons called the "Rulamer Run."

Charts might be purchased for an exorbitant fee in another major port, but this requires a Streetwise roll (at -2) and a payment of \$500 or more for the charts. Forgeries are common; a failed Streetwise roll means the heroes find out that fact first-hand. Alternatively, a guide who knows the way might be hired, but the cost depends on the guide. Naturally, the more reliable Maze guides cost the most.

Rulamer can be reached by the seat of one's pants, but it ain't easy. A ship that runs the approach too fast is likely to smash against the channel walls, while one that goes too slow can get trapped in a dangerous riptide. For these reasons, navigating the approach to Rulamer is considered a Dramatic Task (see *Savage Worlds*).

On each of the five actions, the captain of the vessel makes a Boating roll at -2, and members of the crew may Cooperate on the attempts. The -2 penalty is negated if the captain is aided by accurate charts or a knowledgeable guide. Failure on the task means the vessel suffers a Collision (see *Savage Worlds*) at maximum speed, and is run aground. Success means the ship reaches Rulamer more or less in one piece.

the charm,
unworried
as to what the future
might bring.

- **Sournois Renard:** Wild Card. Use Townsfolk stats in the *Deadlands Marshal's Handbook*, but add the Attractive, Charismatic, and Snakeoil Salesman Edges.

TALK O' THE TOWN

The rocky sea channels that hide Rulamer also shelter a number of story opportunities. Here are a few suggestions and *Savage Tales*.

Approaching Rulamer

Just getting to the hidden pirates' cove can be an adventure...or a disaster!

Ghostly Vengeance

The ghostly wreck of the *Seigneur Chanceux* emerges from the mists near Rulamer some nights to exact revenge upon the sailors who lived—and anyone else it finds, too!

Consider the ship a Large Freighter that seems to glide across the waves with supernatural velocity (Acc/Top Speed: 10/30, Toughness: 16 (5), Crew: 12+28, Notes: Travels 50 miles per pound of ghost rock). The crew numbers 24, and they are ghosts one and all. They assume a semi-solid state when closing in to attack a vessel, meaning they can be hurt by normal weapons (use Maze Pirate stats in the *Deadlands Marshal's Handbook*, adding the Undead Special Ability).

If the *Seigneur Chanceux* is sunk or its crew “killed,” the victors are free to sail away. But the ghosts of the *Seigneur Chanceux* can never rest until the last survivor of the original wreck is finally dead. Until that time, the ghost ship simply reforms the next night under the moon and continues marauding, hoping to finish off their former crewmates.

CHANNEL RUN

Location: Rulamer (Fear Level 4)

There are a few situations in which you might run this tale, Marshal, depending on how the posse gets to Rulamer in the first place. If the poor muchachos are lost or shipwrecked, Millicent Schork might rescue the group in the *Dragon's Caress*, taking them to Rulamer in return for a favor—one that's called in to kick off this tale.

Otherwise, Schork approaches the posse with her offer: \$50 each per day, plus food and water, to act as guards

DRAGON'S CARESS

Millicent's Maze Runner is christened *Dragon's Caress*, and it's been extensively modified. It requires less crew than a normal runner at the cost of a weapon mount. The *Dragon's Caress* mounts two Gatlings—her maximum armament.

Acc/Top Speed: 10/30;
Toughness: 10 (2); **Crew:** 2+5;
Cost: \$25,000; **Notes:** Travels 40 miles per pound of ghost rock. Mounts two Gatling guns (Range: 24/48/96, Damage: 2d8, RoF 3, Shots 100, AP 2).

on her vessel for a quick trip. Schork is vague on the details, merely saying she needs to pick up some supplies for Sournois Renard. She introduces her deckhand, John Tucker, a mute who diligently performs his tasks without question.

- **Millicent Schork:** Wild Card. Use Maze Pirate stats in the *Deadlands Marshal's Handbook*, but add Fighting d10, replace the Edges with the Captain, Cannoneer, and Martial Arts Edges, and replace the Hindrances with Wanted (Minor).
- **John Tucker:** Use Maze Pirate stats in the *Deadlands Marshal's Handbook*.

Sailin' the Channels

The trip is long, punctuated by frequent turns and stops to prevent the *Dragon's Caress* (see sidebar above for the ship's stats) from being noticed by the various factions of the Maze. Throw in some random encounters if you feel it's appropriate, Marshal.

Read the following passages when the Maze runner reaches its destination:



Eventually Milli pulls into a small cove, whistling a staccato rhythm as the rocks approach. The whistle is returned in kind, and from behind an outcropping emerges a wiry Chinese man. He hails Schork, nervously eyeing the armed posse.

"Expecting trouble?" he calls out.

Milli replies, "Never from you, Po."

They engage in small talk as Po leads you all to a small, natural alcove in the shoreline containing eight large barrels.

The barrels are the cargo, and they are very heavy; each barrel weighs from 60 to 150 pounds. Milli cautions the shootists—who, unless they protest, have now become cargo handlers as well—that the contents are very fragile despite their weight, and they should be careful putting them on the boat.

A successful Strength roll from each worker on the job ensures the barrels are safely moved, shifting and turning in the

hands of the posse as they load them onto the *Dragon's Caress*, with nothing spilling out. A failed Strength roll means a barrel drops with a crash, eliciting a mouthful of verbal abuse from Milli. With a successful Notice roll (-2), a listener catches a faint muffled yelp or groan as the dropped barrel hits the ground.

If snake eyes are rolled, a barrel accidentally smashes open—skip ahead to **Precious Cargo**, below.

Unwanted Attention

When all the barrels are packed onto the boat, Schork waves goodbye to Po and steams off toward Rulamer. When all seems to be going well, the *Dragon's Caress* chugging through calm Pacific waters with blue skies overhead, call for Notice rolls from the entire posse, and First Mate Tucker as well. Success means a cowpoke sees dark shapes gliding

underwater around the boat, followed by a series of faint, sharp thumps against the hull and paddlewheels.

Read the following when the captain is informed of the threat:

Captain Schork starts barking orders at everyone to man the guns and get ready for a fight. Seconds later the water around the boat froths and roils. The dorsal fins of what look like large sharks are visible in the foam.

Suddenly, a huge shark explodes from the water! It lands on the deck in a shower of brine. Legs and arms begin to form where tail and fins had been. What do you do?

These aren't your garden variety sharks, Marshal, they're weresharks. Deal Action Cards now—the rest of the creatures spend the first round underwater, shapechanging into bestial forms, and then climb onboard in the second round of combat.

• **Weresharks (1, plus 1 per two heroes):**

See the *Deadlands Marshal's Handbook*.

Precious Cargo

After the fight, one of the barrels lies broken open. Inside, to everyone's surprise, is a young Chinese woman, roughly 20 years old, seemingly lifeless. Success on a Healing or Knowledge (Medicine) roll reveals the girl is alive, but in a deep sleep. A raise tells the physician she was knocked out with a powerful anesthetic.

Schork is just as shocked as the rest of the posse; a successful Notice roll reveals a lack of any duplicity on the part of "Masher Milli." Livid with fury, she pries open the rest of the barrels to reveal seven more women, all between the ages of 12 and 20.

In one of the barrels a note is hidden, addressed to Sournois Renard from someone named Feichei Li—a.k.a.

"Suitcase Lee." Basically, it's a note of profound thanks to Renard for helping these poor girls escape servitude, with lots of flowery phrases and purple prose.

A successful Smarts roll allows a reader to glean a deeper meaning—these girls were bound for slavery in Kang's mesa town of Dragon's Breath before agents of the New Tomorrow Triad hijacked them and placed them under Feichei Li's protection. With a raise on the Smarts roll, the reader infers that Renard's duty is to smuggle the girls inland and away from California before Kang's people learn what's happened.

Milli mutters,

If Kang finds out about this, we're all doomed.

She plans to have words with Renard as soon as they dock. For now, all they can do is head directly for Rulamer at full steam and hope for the best.

Dragon Chasers

Unfortunately, the worst has already happened: Kang knows his property was stolen, and he's dispatched an ironclad, the *Relentless*, to retrieve it. A few hours after the fight with the weresharks, the low-profiled warship appears under two plumes of black smoke, bearing down on the smaller vessel.

Use the Chase rules in *Savage Worlds*. This is an Extended Chase between watercraft, so Boating rolls are made by each ship's captain. The Chase leads through an incredibly dangerous series of channels, making maximum speed impossible, so Milli gains no bonus for her vessel's higher top speed.

However, Milli can gain the benefit of Cooperative rolls from a total of two additional navigators so long as they have the Boating skill. Other passengers can man the Gatlings, make attacks each round with their own weapons, provide damage control, or stand by and watch.

THE RELENTLESS

Ironclads designed for use in the Maze are much smaller and more maneuverable than standard ironclads. Their heavy armor and low freeboard make them less vulnerable to the currents of the Maze.

Acc/Top Speed: 5/15; **Toughness:** 18 (7); **Crew:** 12+20; **Notes:** Travels 10 miles per pound of ghost rock. The Relentless mounts three muzzleloader cannons port and three starboard, another two cannons fore and two aft, and two Gatling guns port and two starboard.

Underwater hazards—rocks, wrecked ships, or debris left over from the Great Quake—are rife along the Chase's path, and unpredictable currents are liable to throw a ship right up against the channel walls if the skipper's not careful. Whenever a character's Action Card is a Club, in addition to any other Complications the character's Boating rolls also suffer a -2 penalty that round due to some water hazard.

If the *Relentless'* crew is able to run the *Dragon's Caress* aground or destroy her mobility, they close in for a boarding action and attack. If the *Dragon's Caress* manages to escape, she reaches the safety and seclusion of Rulamer.

- **Captain Xu Jin:** Wild Card. Use Maze Pirate stats in the *Deadlands Marshal's Handbook*, but he has Smarts d6 and Spirit d8. Add the Command, Command Presence, Fervor, Inspire, and Natural Leader Edges.
- **Relentless Crew (30):** Use Maze Pirate stats in the *Deadlands Marshal's Handbook*.

Back in Rulamer

Read the following to your group when the ship arrives at Rulamer:

Milli has First Mate Tucker moor the ship, and to you she says, "Let's go."

She storms off towards Renard's establishment, fury written on her features. As she enters the small shop whose sign reads RENARD IMPORTS & EXPORTS, Milli pushes a customer out of her way and decks Renard, dropping him with a single punch.

Renard is outraged, but when Schork picks him up and demands an explanation for what was in the barrels Renard becomes noticeably more compliant. He explains,

My sweet Milli! It's not what it seems, my dear—it is true love.

Yes, I fell in love with a young woman, Wei Lei, who was bound for slavery in one of Warlord Kang's mesa towns. My staunch ally Feichi Li arranged for the girls to feign their deaths and be transported to Rulamer. Those other women are family and servants of Wei Lei... the girl you rescued from the life of servitude and suffering.

Schork calms down when she hears the whole story, but hits Renard again anyway for "not being up-front." Renard wipes the blood off his lip with a handkerchief, then doubles her pay, including the posse's share, thanking everyone profusely for their discretion.

When Wei Lei and Renard are reunited, it's clear his story was true. Either way you cut it, Renard owes the heroes a big favor, and he tells them so.

THE COLLECTOR

Location: Rulamer (Fear Level 4)

Run this short tale when your cowpokes are thirsty. They get involved with the gangs of Rulamer, and it shouldn't be too hard to choose sides!

The Story So Far

If there's one thing Brun Demarais is known for—besides his brute strength—it's

his greed. He's recently taken to "collecting" two items: the badges of lawmen who find their way to Rulamer, and as much of what belongs to Webbe and his boys as possible.

As usual, he causes problems to get a rise out of his opponent. In the latest of a series of blunt insults to Webbe, Brun opens a water counter near Webbe's estate, charging double his usual price to Webbe's people (\$10 in cash, or two water vouchers, for a single glass). It just makes him laugh when they get sore and holler at him. Plus, he hopes his enemies are driven to such distraction they're unprepared for a raid on Webbe's warehouses.

The Set-Up

The compadres become involved when they attempt to buy water or redeem water vouchers and stumble upon the scene, only to find Brun charges them double too. Any kind of protest on the part of the characters brings unwanted attention from Brun's Boys, and soon Brun himself.

If any of the heroes are lawmen—openly or in secret—Brun's Boys aim to find it out. They inspect every customer closely, especially strangers in town like the posse members, trying to figure out if they're involved in enforcement. If they are, or if the Boys even think they are, they become targets of the gang lickety-split.

- **Brun's Boys (2 per hero):** Use Outlaw stats in the *Deadlands Marshal's Handbook*. They're armed with knuckledusters (Damage: Str+d4), a few have shotguns (Range: 12/24/48, Damage: 1-3d6, RoF 1, Shots 1, Shooting +2), and most wear double-action revolvers (Range: 12/24/48, Damage: 2d6+1, RoF 1, Shots 6, AP 1). They all have the Mean Hindrance.

Shady Characters

Whether the party is identified as containing lawmen, or just associated with Webbe by virtue of being charged double, Webbe instinctively susses out that he ought to make friends with these newcomers to Rulamer.

When the posse is out of sight of Brun's Boys' water counter, a young man approaches casually and says,

I want you to meet with my boss, Mr. Webbe, about a job. More accurately, it's Mr. Webbe who wants to meet you. So what do you say?

If the group agrees, the boy guides them through the city, over several bridges. Folks with any knowledge of Rulamer know how how dangerous these neighborhoods are reputed to be at night, but a successful Notice or Streetwise roll along the route reveals armed sentries hidden in dark alleys and under shadowed elms, watching carefully. All of them seem to be looking out for the heroes' well-being.

Meetin' Webbe

Finally the boy stops at a large estate on an isolated plateau accessed by only one bridge. This is Bedivere Webbe's estate. The single guard at the end of the bridge allows them to pass.

Once they're ushered inside, the buckaroos find Webbe's home very modest by "civilized" standards, but almost opulent for a small Maze settlement. Webbe greets them in a small room that barely fits him and the posse. He says,

Thank you for joining me. I trust your walk here was uneventful? Good.

I know what happened at the water counter today, and I'm appalled. He's charging my men double too. The question is why. And why did you receive the same treatment?

So here's the proposition—I'd like you to join Brun's gang. Infiltrate it, to be exact. Find out what they're up to. In return I'll pay you handsomely, and give you all the fresh water you can drink. Brun might own a purifier, but most of the smart folks who live here have rain barrels, and plenty of 'em.

If the group accepts, Webbe offers them \$350 each for the job. He also lets them know they're probably being watched by Brun's men even as they speak. He suggests,

We have to make it look like you're no friends of mine. So we're going to act like you came here looking to join up, and I turned you down. To make it authentic, one of you hombres is going to trade punches with my lad Herschel here on the way out.

His "lad" Herschel Sorn might be 18 years old, but he looks big enough to hunt bears with a switch and catch a dozen. When everyone's ready, Webbe starts in to hollering about how these rotten, no-good varmints better be off his property pronto or he'll string 'em all up. Herschel and few other men herd the posse out. On the front lawn Herschel gives one of your heroes a nice, hard shove.

Let the cowpoke have fun with this fight, Marshal, after all, it's just to get the point across. Herschel's punches deal Non-Lethal Damage, and the lad expects the same from his opponent.

Herschel Sorn: Use Outlaw stats in the *Deadlands Marshal's Handbook*, but Herschel has Strength d10, Vigor d10, the Brawny Edge, and Toughness 8.

As the rigged fight ends in front of Webbe's estate, Webbe shouts at the posse,

You're not good enough! Never come back here again. If you do, you're dead!

Brun's Water Station

As soon as the cowpunchers are out of sight of Webbe's estate, they're approached by a surly looking sailor, who asks if they're looking to join the winning side. If they answer yes, he takes them to a more squalid and run-down area of Rulamer to meet Brun. Read the following when they arrive there:

Arriving at a large warehouse, you hear a high-pitched wailing and clanging from inside. It's actually the gang's water

purifier, chugging away through the night to make money for Brun and his cutthroats.

The purifier itself is about 13 feet in diameter, and sits in the warehouse's center and rises up into the loft. Pipes for steam and water condensation fill nearly the entire space—dripping, wheezing, rattling, shrieking, and generally making the place as hot as election day in a hornet's nest.

Two harried-looking engineers scramble across the scaffolds and up and down the narrow staircases that encase the two-story-tall machine. They're hard at work with wrenches and pliers, preventing the gizmo from flying apart at the seams. Numerous barrels of ghost rock line the walls, acquired from a variety of sources, guarded by at least a dozen of Brun's Boys.

Brun emerges laughing from a tangle of pipes and cloud of steam, loud and boorish, as he says,

You joined the right side by taking in with me! That Webbe doesn't know his arse from his elbow, and he's going to be left high and dry when we take over Rulamer. Cornering the market on fresh water's only the beginning.

How are your backs? Strong? Tonight we're going to find out what you're made of, amigos. Do right by me, and you've got nothing to worry about. We're just waiting for one o' my boys to arrive, and we'll do our thing.

In the meantime, what happened over at Webbe's place?

Allow the dudes a chance to explain themselves, using the front Webbe suggested or some other story, and have the leader make a Persuasion roll. Any sodbuster with a mind to can aid the roll with a Persuasion attempt of her own. It's opposed by Brun's Notice d6; if he's convinced he accepts the posse with open arms, offering them a place amongst his Boys.

- **Brun Desmarais:** Wild Card. Use Outlaw stats in the *Deadlands Marshal's*

Handbook, but add the Brawny and Reputation Edges and the Greedy (Major) Hindrance.

- **Brun's Boys (15):** Use Outlaw stats in the *Deadlands Marshal's Handbook*. They're armed with knuckledusters (Damage: Str+d4), four have shotguns (Range: 12/24/48, Damage: 1-3d6, RoF 1, Shots 1, Shooting +2), and 12 of them wear double-action revolvers (Range: 12/24/48, Damage: 2d6+1, RoF 1, Shots 6, AP 1). They all have the Mean Hindrance.

Not Him Again!

While waiting for the last of Brun's Boys to arrive, Brun expounds upon his hatred of lawmen of all stripes, be they public servant or private investigators. He shows off several marshal and sheriff badges pinned to the inside of his coat. Any lawmen among the posse might be disconcerted enough to require another Persuasion roll opposed by Brun's Notice, as above, but that's at your discretion, Marshal.

As Brun finishes his tirade, the last member of his gang arrives—Herschel Sorn, the very guard the posse threw a fight with earlier! "That's them," he says, pointing at the cowpokes. Brun screams, "Private lawmen, the worst kind!" and signals his men to attack!

Herschel Sorn: Use Outlaw stats in the *Deadlands Marshal's Handbook*, but Herschel has Strength d10, Vigor d10, the Brawny Edge, and Toughness 8.

Aftermath

When the fight is over, Herschel Sorn surrenders immediately if the posse won. He confesses to being bought off, naming another of Webbe's guards who also accepted a bribe. If he's brought back to Webbe, Herschel spills the beans on the entire plot—Brun was just using the water prices as a distraction as he planned a robbery of Webbe's warehouses, which would have happened tonight.

After the truth comes out, Webbe says,

I've decided not to kill you, Herschel. See, it's like this—Rulamer needs a balance of power more than it needs a despot. So I want you to get the hell out of here, and rally whatever's left of Brun's gang. Tell them whatever you want about your escape. Say you fought us and escaped. Doesn't matter. What's important is you're going to lead them if Brun is dead. Understand?

There's just one thing, Herschel. To make your story authentic, you need to look like you've been in a fight. One hell of a fight.

Webbe thrashes Sorn, turning him every which way but loose, and finishes the beating by opening a gash across the bigger man's cheek. Webbe says,

Never forget where you got that, or why. Get out.

Webbe thanks the posse, apologizing for the plan's going to pieces. He pays them the agreed-upon fee, and asks them to stay with him during their visit to Rulamer as his guests. The fact that this allows Webbe to keep an eye on such a destabilizing force as the heroes may or may not go unnoticed.

It's up to you, Marshal, whether it's truly Webbe or Brun (if he lives) who has the pistoleros' best interests at heart. One or both of them could be looking to take advantage of the heroes rather than befriend them, and each goes about it in his own way. If Herschel takes over the remnants of Brun's Boys, he's a bit slower to attempt to regain the heroes' trust, but eventually makes a play for their allegiance if they stay in Rulamer long enough.

THE SIEGE O' RULAMER

Location: Rulamer (Fear Level 4)

Run this tale at some point after your heroes have already undertaken the **Channel Run** (see page 79), but not before you're ready for the posse's residence in Rulamer to end.

Every town has secrets. Rulamer's exact location is its biggest. Known only to a select few pirates who can reach it with vessels unscathed, it keeps itself out of major conflict by virtue of inaccessibility. But rumors fly, information seeps out, and as it's sometimes said in the Maze, "Kang finds out *everything* eventually."

The Story So Far

When he first heard the name of Rulamer, Kang was dismissive of the idea that a Maze city could escape his reach. Not being imprudent, though, Kang assigned a spy to discover Rulamer's exact location. When that spy failed to return, Kang sent another. And then another. With three competent agents lost, Kang was convinced of only one thing: Rulamer most certainly existed.

At no lack of guile or patience, Kang settled on another strategy. Rather than looking for Rulamer, he instead tracked the origin of certain stolen, fenced goods entering Shan Fan (with help from Thin Noodles Ma). That led him to a certain crew of importers, and their trail ended at Renard Imports & Exports—and the labyrinthine network of fog-shrouded, treacherous, haunted sea channels that surround Rulamer.

Now Kang has an agent in place who can assess Rulamer's situation and, more importantly, make sure Kang's will is felt. Wei Lei is one of Kang's best assassins, second only to Red Petals Su in skill and achievements. She concocted the plan to get herself and some elite trainees into the city, one which the posse unwittingly helped enact in **Channel Run** (page 79)!

The Set-Up

It's early evening when the posse passes Renard's shop, only to bump into Milli Schork and get stopped in their tracks by a full-blown wedding procession. Depending on how involved in Rulamer's day-to-day life the hombres have become,

they might have known of the impending nuptials already. Read the following:

Renard walks with the beautiful Wei Lei on his arm, she dressed in colorful Chinese finery. Renard throws you all a wry grin. "What can I say?" he shouts, "I fell in love as soon as I saw her. We're even doing this according to her customs!"

The bridal party includes all the girls rescued from barrels in one of your previous exploits. As they cross over a bridge, several of the girls pull out long cylinders, lighting a match to them. Holding them aloft, bright fireworks scream out, exploding into the early evening sky over Rulamer.

One observer isn't amused by the display. Though her cries go unheard by most, Milli Schork shouts,

Stop, you idiots! You'll tell the whole Maze exactly where we are! Stop!

Milli manages to reach the bridge and snuff a few of the fireworks before they go off. Wei Lei turns to Schork, apologizing profusely, and claiming she was only following Chinese tradition. She claims not to have realized the danger, and asks the girls to put away the rest of the incendiaries right away.

If any observant cowpoke has a successful Notice roll on her side, she can tell Wei is lying, despite her flushed cheeks and seemingly flustered demeanor. It's hard to press her for more information, however, as she and Renard continue the wedding procession. Schork sighs, looks at the group with a wry grin and asks,

Any o' you hombres need a drink? I sure do. Come on, I'll join you.

Drinks at Anchor

Milli takes thirsty cowpokes to the Anchor Saloon, a small, cramped bar that seems to know her well. Read the following to your group:

Several of the regulars shy away as Milli enters the Anchor, and the

bartender has a whiskey ready for her. Someone cracks a joke about Schork being in a mood because her sweetheart's getting married, a comment that loses him consciousness and a few teeth courtesy of a Schork right hook.

Milli returns to her drink. "I went easy on him, on account o' he might be right."

The rest of this scene simply provides posse members a chance to get to know each other better, especially if someone's new to the band. Give the newest characters Interludes (as described in *Savage Worlds*), or give everyone a chance to draw a card and discuss a bit of their history if you prefer, Marshal.

After a night of carousing, everyone heads home for a long-awaited sleep. Little do they know a great noose is beginning to tighten around all their throats...

The Siege Begins

The following evening just after dark, Wei Lei's devious plan comes to fruition. Led by the wedding procession's fireworks, Kang's fleet of Maze rats arrives near Rulamer and prepares to shell the town from afar. Read the following to your group:

Abruptly you hear rumbling, like distant thunder, followed seconds later by the entire building shaking slightly. Another rumble sounds in the near distance, followed by more shaking, the sound of glass shattering, and the distinct crack of earth and stone shearing off into the ocean. People start to scream.

Rushing outside reveals the source of the disturbance: a fleet of ships the next channel over, barraging the town with indirect cannon fire. Already a sizeable amount of the city is showing signs of destruction, with half-collapsed buildings, falling debris, and small fires everywhere.

The townsfolk scramble to react, sailors boarding ships and Webbe and his men manning their own cannon

Random Difficulties

Use this table to roll for random dangers the posse encounters if it tries to escape Rulamer by land. Subtract 2 from rolls on this table if the posse has no guide.

d6	Result
1	Bridge out, new route needs to be found.
2	Rubble falls from cliffs above. Agility roll to avoid Fatigue (Bumps & Bruises).
3	Fire blocks the path forward.
4	2d6 Maze rats loyal to Kang.
5-6	No problems, path is clear.

embankments hidden in the cliff faces. It's too little, too late, and there's nothing to shoot at. Any pirate vessels that make it out through the dangerous Rulamer Run, or another of the few straits that access Rulamer, have Kang's fleet of ironclads, gunboats, and Chinese junks to face. The town and its hardened residents are in chaos.

You Got a Better Idea?

As the bemused heroes try to find shelter from the rain of cannonballs, Milli Schork approaches and yells over the din,

Renard! Help me find him and get him out of here, and I'll take you with us. I'll drop you anywhere you want, for free. Well?

If the posse let her go on her own way, they need to try to navigate the treacherous landscape without a guide. If they join her, they've got one hell of a fight ahead of them.

Assassin Squad!

Arriving at Renard Imports & Exports, Milli and the steadfast cowpokes find the place all locked up, shades drawn and windows shuttered, though clearly a lantern glows within.

Inside Wei Lei and her fanatical fellow warriors have Renard tied to a chair and gagged in the study, while they pore over a hastily sketched map of Rulamer and discuss—in Chinese—whether to assault Bedivere Webbe or Brun Demarais first, and what ploy to use to gain access to their headquarters.

Creative players might suggest any number of methods to gain access, from the use of some gizmo or power, to Lockpicking rolls, even creating a loud diversion or just knocking on the front door. They might even wait to see if Wei Lei makes the first move, in which case they set out for Webbe's estate after roughly an hour of planning.

We'll leave the exact circumstances up to you and your posse, Marshal, but until then Wei Lei and her nest of rattlesnakes await in Renard's place. All the while, fusillades of cannon fire continue to rain down upon the pirate cove.

Wei Lei: Wild Card. See page 125.

Wei Lei's Warriors (8): Use Rail Warrior stats in the *Deadlands Marshal's Handbook*, adding Strength d8. They are armed with Chinese swords (Str+d6).

Gettin' Outta Dodge

Once the assassins are dispatched or the posse retreats in defeat, Schork gives directions. If the rescuers failed to get Renard, they'd better think of another plan and execute it quickly—Milli won't leave without her beloved Sournois. The exporter retrieved, they rush down back alleys and

courtyards, around tight corners, and across half-destroyed bridges. Roll twice on the **Random Difficulties** table along the way.

Finally the party runs past a small, wood-framed house, and finds themselves staring from a sheer cliff at the water below. Schork insists they move a sizeable rock, which hides a narrow tunnel leading downward and a rope ladder. The ladder leads down to a tiny cove sheltered by high cliffs. A steam launch bobs on the waves, this one named the *Graceful Exit*.

First Mate John Tucker is already onboard, prepping the ship to cast off. Good timing, too, as once the fleeing sodbusters board, one of Kang's junks, armed to the teeth and packed with Maze rats, sails past the narrow entrance to the cove, having found one of the two narrow straits leading to the hidden city. They don't notice the *Graceful Exit* unless the cowpokes' escape has been too easy for your liking, Marshal.

Barring any further trouble the launch sails out with none the wiser, and Milli makes good on her promise to take the buckaroos to whatever port they want to visit.

Aftermath

The city of Rulamer shudders as cannon fire hits it in continuous waves. A tremendous crack and roar sees half the city demolished, falling into the ocean. At that point all resistance is shattered, the gangs either dead or fled into the rice paddies. The rice farmers were smart enough to hide in their root cellars moments after the cannon fire started!

It's up to the Marshal which of the city's locals survived or perished in the barrage. If Wei lived, she swears bloody vengeance upon the people who prevented her from executing Kang's will. For the time being, she's put in charge of Rulamer's reconstruction as a settlement firmly under Kang's control.

Wagonsend

Wagonsend took its name from the literal cause of its foundation. A traveling sideshow hit upon rough times, their wagons falling ever further into disrepair. When it was decided their tour could go no further, they decided to settle in for a spell. Once rooted, however, their wagons gained stone foundations instead of new wheels. Over time, they accepted the area they'd settled in as home.

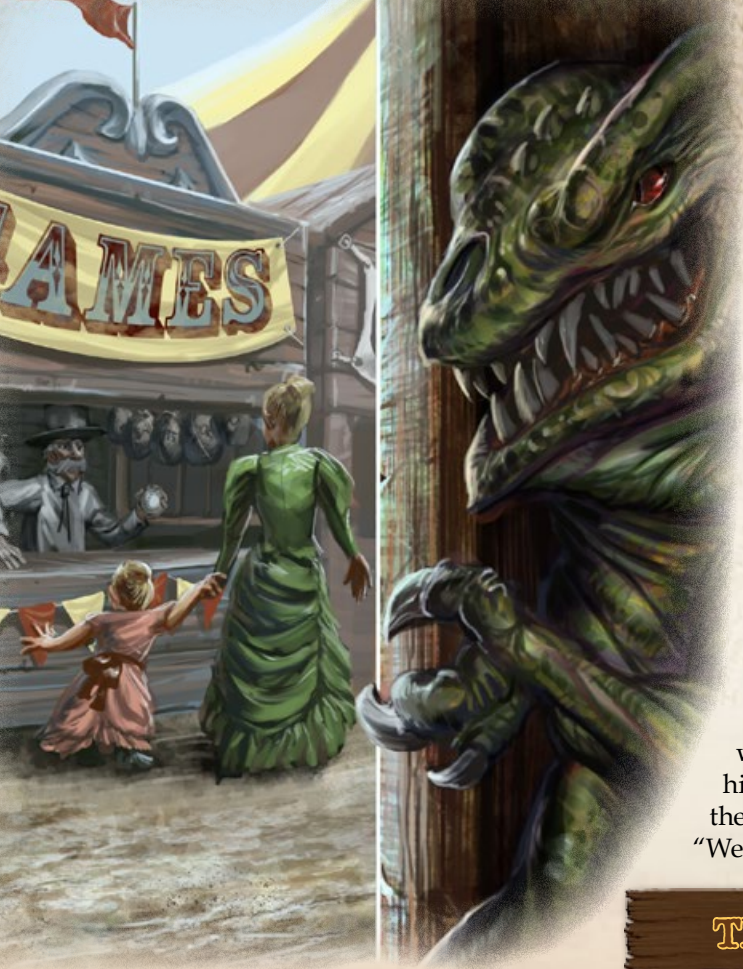
J. T. Boniface, proprietor of the original entertainment troupe and one of the town's founders, had a visionary idea. Instead of traveling all around the West, why not make the people come to the show? Clear of purpose, he planned

Wagonsend in part as a permanent circus, another part home to the circus folk who work there, and partly a base for other traveling sideshows during off months and between tours. He supposed a grounded structure would allow more elaborate performances than a mobile circus could ever have dreamed of, and a fortuitous convergence of rail lines nearby helped his cause immensely.

So determined, Boniface spent most of his savings and liquidated all of his traveling equipment to build permanent fairgrounds. Within the year J. T. Boniface's Circus of Wonders opened and made back its initial investment, and then some. Word spread,

1. Big Top Saloon
2. Circus of Wonders
3. Fessler House
4. Funhouse
5. White Elephant Inn

Wagonsend



positioned to become a rarity in the Weird West—a town that thrives purely on its entertainment value.

For a typical Western settler, accustomed only to farm or ranch life, Wagonsend can be a very disconcerting place. Conversely, the place is a relaxing refuge for the traveling sideshows, vaudevillians, freaks, geeks, and carnies who make a living roaming the West. It's an ideal place to make repairs on specialized equipment, mend tents, and swap tricks of the trade. Moreover, Wagonsend is the place where they're free to be themselves, without putting on false airs or hiding their appearances. Truly the town lives up to its nickname, "Weirdest Town in the West."

THE CITY NOW

Region: Deseret, Great Northwest, or Disputed Territories

Fear Level: 3

and visitors came to Wagonsend from all around to see daredevils perform the most spectacular stunts known in the West. Furthermore, the city grew prodigiously as businesses opened to support not just the visitors but circus folk of all stripes.

Keeping to his original vision, Boniface used circus terminology whenever possible in developing a local government. Even the titles of city officials are right out of the big top, with Boniface installing himself as the first "Ringmaster" (that's Mayor to you and me, amigo) of Wagonsend. Although Boniface was an exemplary businessman, the matters of government escaped him. He soon abdicated his position to a more bureaucratic member of his retinue. Three Ringmasters later, the city is strongly

Wagonsend is grandiose and vulgar all at once. For first-time visitors, it's hard not to get caught up in the spectacle of Wagonsend. From outside town one catches the rich, savory scents of circus food, or hears the faint hum of organ music. Soon the gaudy lights of the attractions come into view, just beyond the next hill. Their shows run Thursday through Sunday, each and every one of them standing room only.

The current Ringmaster is Thornton Fessler, a sword swallower and career circus man with a great deal of business savvy. He's able to pick out the most favorable terms of any contract and can

negotiate a gunfighter out of his trusty sidearm if given enough time.

His family members have moved into the dual roles of performer and politician. His wife, Susie Fessler, is the town Barker, while his brother, Ezra, is the Strongman—and incidentally one of the best jugglers ever seen 'round these parts. Under their leadership, the town has prospered as an attraction to normal folk and a safe haven for carnies—and those who might be considered “freaks” somewhere else.

It's difficult to tell how many people live in Wagonsend at any given time. The constant flow of people in and out of the city means that except for the winter months—when the sideshows “come home” and the tourists tend to stay home—there's no consistency from day to day. At best guess, there's a minimum of 1,000 people in and around Wagonsend, but that can drop to 600 or rise to double that in the space of a few days. The city is most crowded with tourists and gawkers on weekends.

Small acts and gewgaw merchants line the main streets, entertaining visitors to the Circus of Wonders as they pass—and taking their money, of course! The Circus itself is an opulent, tent-shaped building capable of holding hundreds of people, situated so every street leads by twists and turns to its main gate. Smaller tents ring the building, serving as entranceways or individual acts and freak show booths.

With the amount of money that comes into the town, it's natural for human greed to follow. Street vendors pass off overpriced, showy trinkets as collectibles, scams and rigged games of chance lie in every alley, bandits harass people heading to the town, and pickpockets are everywhere. Regular folk should keep an eye on their cash and weapons when walking around Wagonsend, or they might end up losing both.

POINTS OF INTEREST

Here are some of the best-known, biggest, and most popular places in Wagonsend, as shown on the nearby map.

Big Top Saloon: Decorated in festive, circus-worthy colors, this tavern is popular among tourists but not often frequented by circus folk.

Circus of Wonders: The enormous, striped tent at the center of town houses the main event—the Circus of Wonders!

Fessler House: Here the Fessler Family dwells in vile evil, but you wouldn't know that to look at the wholesome exterior. Inside, Susie Fessler invokes bloody rituals for her dark masters.

Funhouse: Located at the midpoint of the midway, the funhouse is always open for an afternoon's diversion, with oddly distorting mirrors, confusing mazes, and halls designed to rattle and shake with the help of steam-powered pistons. Some folks who go into the funhouse never come back out...

Midway: This long avenue passes for Main Street in Wagonsend, and leads to the Circus of Wonders itself. But all along its length are booths, games, shops, entertainers, refreshment stands, and the like, all for visitors' amusement.

White Elephant Inn: A popular place for families who stay overnight, as well as the residence of undercover Texas Ranger Morgan Devon.

TITLES IN WAGONSEND

The naming conventions used for official titles in Wagonsend do not denote any real difference in these positions from other towns. It's just a way to lend added flavor and a unique charm to Wagonsend, which is what Boniface intended.

Most officials aren't upset when called by the title they'd have somewhere else, but most will also gently correct the offender. For convenience, here's a listing of the positions and their names in Wagonsend. Eliminate or create more of these as needed to fit your tales, Marshal.

Acrobat: Madam

Barker: Mail carrier

Busker: President of the Chamber of Commerce

Clown: Saloon owner

Contortionist: Owner of a small shop or store; an entrepreneur

Knife Thrower: Mortician

Lion Tamer: Tax collector

Ringmaster: Mayor

Strongman: Marshal; deputies are called "Strongarms"

Ghost stories and fevered tales of hauntings are on the rise in Wagonsend, but it isn't because the souls of the dead have suddenly gotten restless. It's because of the town's growing manitou population, drawn to the region by Susie "Meadowlark" Fessler's diabolical influence. These foul things dwell in the Hunting Grounds, but in the dark of night they sometimes slip through to the real world for a few hours, or whisper horrible inspirations in sleeping people's ears.

THE LOCALS

The people of Wagonsend are some of the most diverse in the West. Every sort of unusual specimen and nationality resides here, from dwarves to bearded ladies to Siamese twins and people of seemingly every place on earth.

A few abominations have found their way into Wagonsend as well, either as attractions or pets...but as you'll see, Marshal, a few of the locals are worse than any critter the Reckoners could conjure up.

Thornton Fessler

Thornton Fessler is a capital showman, having come to Wagonsend after a few years of touring with his "Marinated Men Sideshow" act. He'd built up a decent bit of a reputation among other performers as a fellow who would fight for the right cause at the right times.

His wavy hair and neatly trimmed beard allowed him to put on civil clothes and appear almost as a proper gentleman. This had the effect of disarming a good number of bureaucrats and politicians who sought to sneak out of their contracts. If they saw his show, the sword-swallowing, fire-breathing, flaming whip, and bed of nails tricks never failed to crank up the intimidation factor.

When Thornton, his wife, and brother first set foot in Wagonsend, they saw a city rife with potential. When the next Ringmaster elections came, Thornton threw his hat into the ring, winning a close race. He's been so popular since then, though, that he won the most recent election in a landslide.

It didn't hurt that his closest competitor had a sudden engagement in New York he just *had* to attend, leaving in the middle of the night. Nowadays, Thornton's word is pretty much law, and the people of Wagonsend obey with little question.

• **Thornton Fessler:** See page 124

Susie “Meadowlark” Fessler

Susie “Meadowlark” Fessler is a full-blooded Indian, with a small but very athletic frame. The story most people know about her life is that her tribe had been wiped out by a rival one, and Susie—then called Meadowlark—was kept alive as a slave.

Somehow, the silver-tongued Thornton talked his way into performing for a Sioux tribe as the Marinated Men left Deadwood, in exchange for safe passage from the Nations. While the show went on, Meadowlark snuck into their wagon and stayed hidden until they were well out of the Disputed Territories. As stories go, it's not a bad one. Like many stories, not a word of it is true.

Susie's actually an adept sorceress, so adept her family was shocked at how long she'd hidden her talents. Her people cast her out when they figured out she was dealing with manitous. That didn't set too well with her, so she set about making quite a few deals with dark powers in order to punish them. In the end, she destroyed her tribe and rendered her soul ripe for damnation.

Meeting Thornton allowed Susie time to concoct a plausible story. Truth be told, she's the real Ringmaster of the town, forcing everyone to dance to her tune. With the black magic granted to her by the Reckoners, she serves as active Fearmonger of the region, and is largely responsible for weaving the dark web of dread that's fallen over Wagonsend.

- **Susie “Meadowlark” Fessler:** See page 124.

Ezra “Eagle Eye” Fessler

Ezra Fessler is Thornton's younger brother and the current Strongman of the town. His position really isn't about enforcing the law, it's more about protecting the interests of his brother and sister-in-law. He's almost a dandy in his elaborate, colorful outfits that

showcase his curly blond hair and grinning youthful features. He barks orders to his ever-present Strongarms, sending his deputies to do all sorts of grunt work and general security.

Unlike his performance as a lawman, he's second to none as a showman. His tricks involve not just his Shooting skill but also his juggling proficiency. One particular crowd pleaser is when he juggles six guns at a time, drilling six different targets with a shot from each gun as it hits his hands. He's a tad bit overconfident, but it's no stretch to say he's the most dangerous man in Wagonsend with a shootin' iron.

- **Ezra “Eagle Eye” Fessler:** See page 122.

George McKinley

Some would say the most unusual thing about George is that he's seven feet, eight inches tall. Others would say it's that he's the town Busker, with a head for numbers like you wouldn't believe. He's a first rate accountant with a keen insight to human nature, able to deduce what businesses need to do to make more money—and when and how to support them.

Wagonsend has made many a pretty penny in increased revenue based on George's suggestions. In addition, he and his wife, Doris, run a “Lost & Found” that caters to reuniting lost children with their parents, a frequent hazard in the town.

George is also the definition of the gentle giant, so keenly aware of his strength that he always shies away from confrontation. Ezra Fessler gets away with bullying George whenever the urge strikes, mainly because George is afraid of what would happen to Ezra if George took a swing at him.

George's wife, a diminutive four-foot-five feet in height, always hectors George to stick up for himself—which makes it look like George is getting bullied by *two* people.

- **George McKinley:** Use Townsfolk stats in the *Deadlands Marshal's Handbook*, but add Strength d10 and the Brawny Edge.

Bertha Drucker

At one time Bertha was the Bearded Lady of another touring sideshow. That was before her hair began to fall out, which made it tough to keep her billed correctly. Worse, she started losing weight and put her second billing as “World’s Largest Woman” in jeopardy. She decided the life of a touring freak wasn’t hers anymore, and stayed behind when last her troupe left Wagonsend.

It’s fortunate for her she did so. A passing sawbones recognized her from a prior engagement, and more importantly recognized her symptoms. He provided her the proper treatment for the disease that was causing her to waste away. Inspired, she convinced the doctor to stay, and trained under him as a nurse. When eventually he passed on, she took up the role of emergency sawbones for visitors. She’s not had the gumption to go to medical school for more formal training, but Bertha can patch someone up long enough to get the poor devil to a proper doctor.

- **Bertha Drucker:** Use Townsfolk stats in the *Deadlands Marshal's Handbook*, and add Healing d8.

Morgan Devon

Morgan Devon, at first glance, is a good-natured, weathered cowboy. His outfits aren’t extravagant like Ezra’s or his tricks as fancy, but he has a warm, charismatic manner that draws people to watch his act. There’s something very “salt o’ the earth” about how he lifts his hat to push back his short black hair and the easy way he smoothes his moustache. All told, he’s the type of fellow one would like to sit at a saloon with and shoot the breeze.

It’s this raw charisma that is the reason the Agency felt he’d be a perfect undercover man for Wagonsend. The number of oddities to come out of that town has grown over the past year, some of them outright abominations. They wanted a man on the inside, so “Devon”—real name Mark Scott—was tapped to be that man. So far, Devon has pegged that Thornton and Susie aren’t quite right, but he doesn’t have much more than his gut to prove it yet.

- **Morgan Devon:** Wild Card. Use Agent stats in the *Deadlands Marshal's Handbook*, adding the Charismatic, Marksman, and Speed Load Edges.

David & Dexter Baltimore

David and Dexter Baltimore are one of the newest attractions in Wagonsend. Abandoned at birth, their last name is that of the city in which they were found. As conjoined—or “Siamese”—twins, they are unable to leave each other, sharing part of their abdomen and torso but otherwise having full use of a pair of arms and legs each. They were first discovered as an “act” in their late teens, traveling with circuses for several years before landing in Wagonsend.

The brothers do a vaudeville-style act, a back-and-forth joke and musical routine. The current celebrities of Wagonsend, they’ve upended quite a number of other acts in popularity. But the fact that David is rude and surly when he isn’t on stage hasn’t helped the locals take to the brothers. Crockett M. Thatcher has been notably outspoken in his dislike of them. Indeed, as their popularity cools, their arguments with Crockett grow more heated. When the twins finally hit rock bottom, it remains to be seen whether the other circus folk are at all helpful.

- **David & Dexter Baltimore:** Use Townsfolk stats in the *Deadlands Marshal's Handbook*. Add Smarts d10, and the new Hindrance Siamese Twins (Major): the twins’ Pace is reduced by 2,

they roll a d4 for running rolls, and suffer a -2 Charisma modifier. Each twin acts on his own Action Card, but both suffer -2 on Agility-based skills that require physical movement (e.g., Climbing, Fighting, Swimming, Throwing, etc.).

David also has the Mean Hindrance, while the Loyal Hindrance is Dexter's cross to bear.

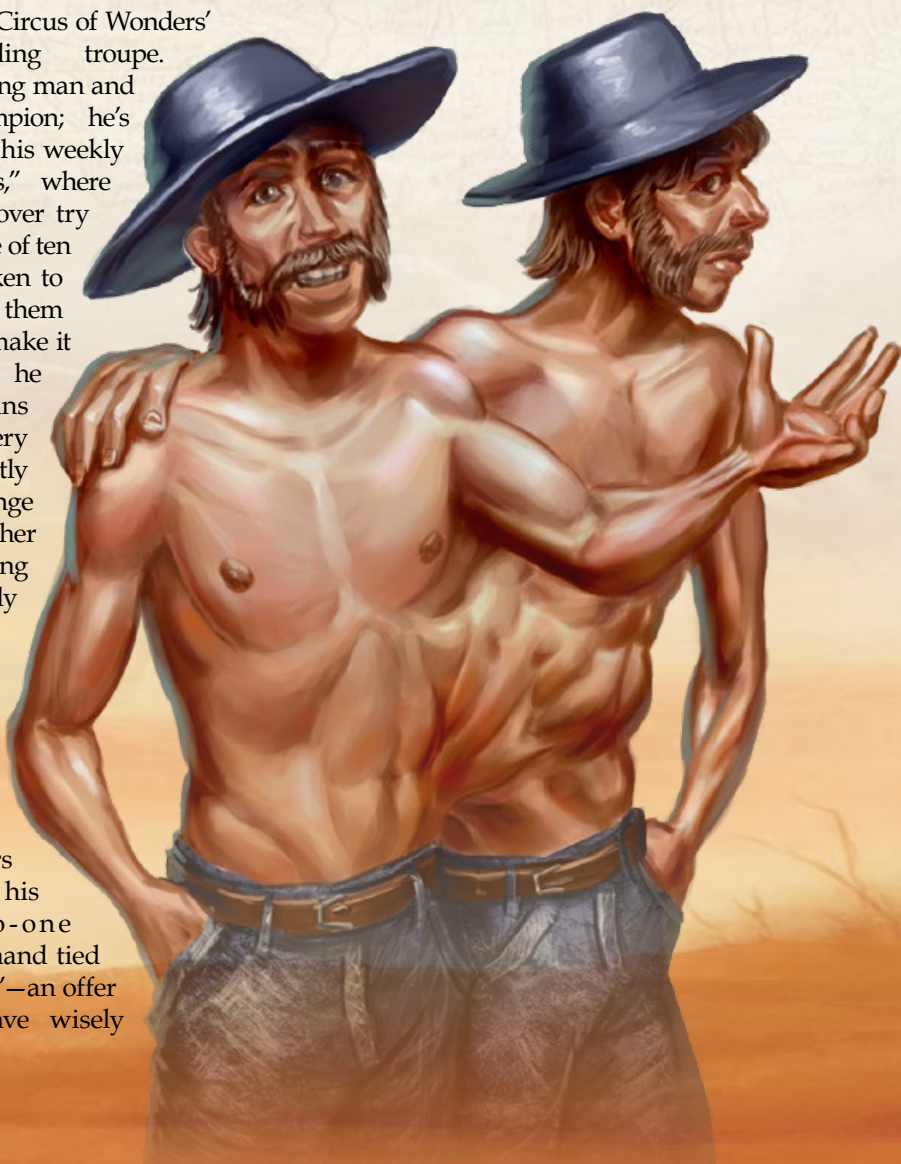
Crockett M. Thatcher

Crockett is a barrel-chested man with a menacing scowl always etched on his face. An imposing six-foot-three and 280 lbs., he's the current "Catch-As-Catch-Can" champion of the Circus of Wonders' resident wrestling troupe. Thatcher is a strong man and a capable champion; he's never lost one of his weekly "open challenges," where people from all over try to beat him inside of ten minutes. He's taken to wrestling two of them at a time just to make it more exciting as he legitimately pins each and every one. He's recently opened his challenge to include other champions, taking one on roughly every other week.

Thatcher's dislike of the Baltimore Brothers is well-known to the locals. Many a night he offers to face them in his ring—"Two-to-one odds! With one hand tied behind my back!"—an offer the brothers have wisely

never taken. It's probable that Thatcher would have been a friend to the twins, as he was initially curious about their medical issues. David's sharp tongue drove him away, by dismissing Thatcher's "sport" as a pastime for brutes and fools. Thatcher has been content to get back at the brothers by becoming increasingly popular, and he hopes to upend them from the top spot.

- **Crockett M. Thatcher:** Wild Card. Use Martial Artist stats in the *Deadlands Marshal's Handbook* (with wrestling as the Trapping), adding Strength d12+2.



TRICK SHOT

Depending on your group, you may have a pistoleer who would fit the bill as a trick shooter. If you'd rather have that cowpoke be the one who fires the trick shot that seems to kill Carnus, Marshal, then Ezra arrests the hapless pistoler instead of Devon. Morgan Devon approaches the posse after the arrest, claiming he knows the character is innocent and wants to help them prove it. The posse might not get their hands on Devon's files this way, but they gain a valuable ally against the Fesslers.

TALK O' THE TOWN

On its surface, Wagonsend is a popular source of local entertainment, if a bit unsettling after dark. But the shadow of Fear clearly hangs over the circus town, leading to dark tales of horror. Here are a few suggestions:

Cannibal Clowns

The itinerant clown population of Wagonsend is diverse, embracing everything from fools to jugglers to the painted faces of true "clowns." Some of those clowns, however, are more interested in lining their guts with terrible feasts than spreading joy and laughter. All they spread now is pure misery.

They've actually become ghouls, and hide the fact by slathering on make-up and wearing fanciful costumes. In this way, the evil things walk among the population unseen and unhindered.

The ghoul-clowns are responsible for several disappearances of visiting spectators. One or two of them lure their prey to lonely spots with fanciful games and pantomime routines, then the rest leap

out, knocking the victims unconscious and stuffing them in burlap sacks. If the poor devils wake up at all, it's during the feast, and they're the main course!

For the most part, the clowns are degenerate performers who've given their souls to the Reckoners and been twisted into cannibal critters for their trouble. But their terrible acts and the stories whispered about the victims' fates have given rise to a new abomination haunting Wagonsend's back streets—Big Botho the Clown. "B.B.," as the ghoul-clowns their leader, is *always* hungry.

Big Botho is a particularly loathsome cuss, even for an abomination. At a glance, it almost looks like a typical clown, maybe a touch oversized, wearing a cap with bells on it, white makeup, and a big red nose. If one's unfortunate enough to take a gander close up, the effect is decidedly different. Botho's skin is oily and deathly pale, his red nose a massively swollen, oozing carbuncle, and his wide mouth is filled with teeth like those of a shark. Also like a shark, Big Botho's eyes are pure black—all pupil. Maybe that accounts for Botho's preferred diet of *raw people*.

- **Big Botho:** Wild Card. Use Ghoul stats in the *Deadlands Marshal's Handbook*.
- **Cannibal Clowns:** Use Ghoul stats in the *Deadlands Marshal's Handbook*.

Haunted Objects

Manitou have been slipping through the veil in increasing numbers to plague the inhabitants of Wagonsend—drawn by Susie Fessler's wicked emanations, no doubt. But a manitou's spirit-stuff can't last long in the physical world, quickly fading to shadows and smoke as the sun rises. To prolong their forays into our world, the crafty manitous have taken to possessing objects such as furniture, curtains, tent flaps, and so forth, attempting to bludgeon or suffocate an hombre when he least expects it!

- **Manitou:** See page 118.

DOUBLE DOWN

Location: Wagonsend (Fear Level 3)

This scenario starts by establishing a light, circus-like feel for Wagonsend, right before kicking the legs out from under it with a simple tale of revenge. But the evidence gained gives a heroic posse everything they need to face down greatest evils of Wagonsend.

The Story So Far

David and Dexter Baltimore are fed up with Crockett Thatcher's not-so-veiled threats, David moreso than Dexter. A manitou has been whispering in David's dreams, goading him into taking revenge on his rival. David concocted a plot to shoot Thatcher during the upcoming Trickshot Competition. If it were done just right, the dark spirit promised him, no one would be the wiser...

The Set-Up

When the cowpokes arrive in Wagonsend, two events are generating a buzz—the Trickshot Competition and the “Catch-As-Catch-Can Championship” wrestling match. Whether they're interested in watching or getting involved, heroes might find either event a welcome diversion from the dusty trail.

Games o' Skill

The events are both drawing huge crowds that are already starting to queue up. The Trickshot Competition is billed as a showdown between Strongman (in the sense of Marshal) Ezra Fessler and local cowboy Morgan Devon. The wrestling spectacle, between reigning champ Crockett Thatcher and challenger Carnus the Great, is being held under a large tent near the Circus of Wonders. The shooting match is in an open-air arena only a few dozen yards away.

SUNDRY CLUES & EVIDENCE

To make your life easier, Marshal, we've moved all the available evidence and lines of investigation here, so you have it readily available no matter what order the posse decides to investigate.

Bullet Hole: A Notice roll reveals a few discrepancies. For one thing, the bullet hole doesn't quite line up with the direction of the trick shot. A raise shows the hole appears to be slightly larger than a typical bullet, or as though the bullet were fired upward from crowd level at Carnus, rather than from the direction of the open-air arena.

If the posse looks outside the tent, it's clear the area between the tent and the shooting range is sheltered by the open air arena's wooden bleachers. With a Notice roll, an observer finds a bit of scorching around the bullet hole, and with a Common Knowledge roll deduces it might have been caused by a muzzle flash—meaning the shooter was very close to the tent.

A successful Tracking roll at -2 discovers footprints in the mud near the bullet hole, showing that not one, but two people were standing by the hole, at an odd angle to each other, and quite close. The footprints head off into the road before the trail is obliterated, remaining at the odd angle the entire way.

Carnus' Belongings: Carnus' luggage is still in the changing room. A quick search of the bags finds extra wrestling gear and documents showing Carnus' real name (Christopher Connor). None of it is germane to the mystery, since Carnus was just an innocent victim.

SUNDRY CLUES & EVIDENCE (CONTINUED)

Crockett Thatcher: If questioned just after the shooting, Thatcher is shaken and quite disturbed. Later he's a bit calmer, drinking whiskey at the Big Top. He reveals that if the shot had taken place even half a second earlier, it would have hit him instead. Carnus had Thatcher in a hold facing that side of the tent, Thatcher barely able to wrest away as the shot rang out. Thatcher clearly remembers hearing the shot.

Morgan Devon's Files: He's been very thorough in his research. The files detail his suspicions on Susie being the true power of Wagonsend and a witch to boot, her total control over Thornton and Ezra, Ezra's "miraculous" and physically impossible shots, and so forth. The fact that Susie was born of the Sioux, and might have betrayed her tribe, is noted.

A file on David & Dexter Baltimore suggests they have been trying to get in the good favor of the ruling trio, particularly with Ezra. The file contains detailed anatomical drawings and sketches of the brothers, particularly showing how they stand and walk. A searcher who inspected the footprints outside the wrestling tent and reads this file can deduce, with a Smarts roll, that the odd angle of the footprints matches that of the Siamese twins' feet.

The Scene o' the Crime: Anyone proficient with a gun can, with a successful Smarts roll, determine that a ricochet from Devon's shot couldn't possibly have killed Carnus, plain and simple. The bullet would have had to pass through a wooden, whitewashed wall.

Read the following if the posse stops in to watch:

The wrasslin' starts about half an hour before the shootin', and goes long into the day. The contest is a bevy of holds, counters, and technical showmanship. The slightly younger Carnus is larger than Thatcher, but appears at the mercy of the more experienced grappler.

The Trickshot Competition highlights not just Ezra Fessler and Morgan Devon, but also a few other gunslingers who've enrolled. After Devon fires—and misses—a particularly difficult shot, a scream comes from the wrestling tent, women and children leaving in droves.

A circus worker rushes from the tent, yelling, "Carnus is shot! We need Bertha!"

Scene o' the Crime

Ezra Fessler bolts through the crowd and makes his way into the tent. If the heroes follow, they have to wrestle past people exiting, horrified. Once they get inside, they see Ezra over the body, claiming they don't need a doctor, they need a Knife Thrower (as in, a mortician).

Ezra walks over to a hole in the canvas of the tent, roughly the size of a bullet, inspecting it for a few moments. He then leaves the scene to arrest Devon—or whoever the trigger man is—leaving a bloody Thatcher and a dead Carnus behind for the undertaker.

Ezra takes inordinate pride in arresting Devon, remarking, "Only a second-rate sharpshooter would make such a mistake." He hustles Devon off to jail, announcing that the competition is over.

Investigations

About an hour later, a Strongarm comes to the posse, asking them to come to the jail at the request of Devon. Seems he wants to talk to a member

of the posse, either the one who is best known or the one who entered the contest, if applicable. He implores them to investigate this, claiming,

*I know a trick shooter when I see one,
and you'll be able to figure out there's
no way I could have fired that shot. Go
check the angles, and prove me innocent.
Look here.*

Devon surreptitiously pulls out a small scrap of paper and a piece of charcoal, and scribbles quietly for a few seconds, hoping Ezra Fessler won't hear. He folds the message over and presses it into the hand of a cowpoke, telling them,

*Be thorough in looking into my story,
would you, friends? And start right
away.*

On the back of the paper is written: "White Elephant Inn 8, under bed, 42-8-15." Should the posse go investigate, they find a pair of Strongarms ransacking the room. Eyeing the intruders, they pull their guns and shoot.

- **Gunman (2):** See the *Deadlands Marshal's Handbook*.

The fight is bound to draw attention, giving the posse only a few moments to search the room and get out before they're discovered. Under the bed, they find a small (but heavy) combination safe, roughly two feet square. Inside are a number of files on various local personalities (highlighting Thornton, Ezra, and Susie), a Sioux knife, \$300, a U.S. Marshal's badge, and documents proving Morgan Devon's real identity as that of Mark Scott, undercover U.S. Agent!

By Their Own Hand

Eventually, the clues should point investigators toward the Baltimore

Brothers, who are performing their act in the arcade. Read the following when the sodbusters close in for the kill:

*Seeing you arrive from their spot at
center stage, the brothers curtly excuse
themselves and duck out the back for a
costume change. After a few moments
pass, and grumbles spread through the
crowd, you doubt the Baltimore Brothers
are coming back.*

Fortunately, the brothers do not run very quickly, so it's easy for the posse to catch them if they want to. Confronted with the evidence at hand or outright accused of the crime, Dexter starts babbling and confessing to everything, while David tries to force his conjoined brother into silence. Out of options, David pulls a derringer from his vest and shoots Dexter through the head before he can implicate the Fesslers.

Dexter doesn't die immediately, instead wounded by the shot. If the pair are taken to Bertha Drucker first, she tries to save Dexter but ultimately fails, then lets Dave know he's going soon himself. Ezra reluctantly frees Devon in light of the twins' confession. For their trouble, Ezra offers the posse free tickets to the Circus of Wonders.

The Baltimore twins are dead by morning.

Aftermath

Once Morgan Devon is clear of the jail, he thanks the posse for its help, and offers to arrange pardons for any crimes they've committed in the CSA—this removes the Wanted Hindrance, should any outlaw have it. Otherwise, he provides them with the cash from the safe as payment. He also lets them know that if they need an ally in Wagonsend, he's happy to assist in any way he can.

Strange Locale Generator

Settlements in the Weird West are few and far between. Many of these small islands of civilization are freshly founded, and for most it's a daily struggle to survive the frontier's harsh realities. A lot of towns are inhabited by honest, God-fearing folk, just trying to make better lives for their families in a land of opportunity.

Others might be ruled by the iron hand of a local cattle baron, hanging judge, ruthless city marshal, or gang of cruel outlaws. Monstrous horrors of the Reckoning haunt some cities and others harbor strange cults, insane inventors, or diabolical servants of evil. But all have one thing in common: if cowpokes dream of hot baths, feather beds, or company other than their horses, they can't be picky. They've got to ride into the next settlement on the trail and see what's to be found.

This system helps you determine what sort of adventure takes place when they get there, Marshal. If you're the type who likes to improvise, this system creates a unique—and often complex—situation into which you can drop your posse. If you like to have all your ducks in a row before game time, take the results and use them as inspiration for a full-blown, scripted adventure. Just be sure to tailor the results to your players' tastes and their heroes' abilities.

Usin' the Generator

With this generator, Marshal, you can determine all the elements of a town-based adventure, lickety-split. Just follow the steps described below. First

we do a quick rundown so there are no surprises later on. No *bad* ones, anyhow.

In the first two steps—for which we borrow familiar terms from Texas Hold 'Em—the Marshal draws a number of cards from the Action Deck. For these steps, just compare the cards' suits and values to the table entries to determine a town's general layout and disposition, what makes it special, and what makes it weird. In the third step, use the cards you already dealt to fill in the final details.

We provide a passel of handy tables below to tell you what each card might mean. Put 'em all together, and they provide a nice outline to be filled with your own devious creations, Marshal. But don't feel constrained; change any result that doesn't fit the plan. Sometimes, though, odd associations that arise between seemingly disparate results create the most unpredictable, memorable adventures.

One thing to remember, Marshal: The Joker isn't a suit. If you draw a Joker, use it as the card's value and draw another card to determine the suit.

LET'S DEAL!

To begin, shuffle the Action Deck and deal two cards: These are your hole cards, to use in the Hole Phase (Step Two, described below). You can look at them now or later, Marshal. Then deal out a row of three face-down "community cards." Turn

them face-up one by one, starting with the leftmost card. After each turn, consult the proper table and follow the instructions.

Step One: Community Phase

Start with the leftmost card. Find its value in the table, then move to the middle card, and finish with the right card. This fleshes out primary characteristics of the settlement, its denizens, and the horrors that lurk in the shadows—waiting for a delicious posse to venture into their lairs.

Left Card: A Nice Place to Spend the Night

The left card establishes basic information about the settlement—whether it's a lonely trading post or a busy cattle town. It stands for the general character of the place, its size, and its purpose. A posse can gather this information with only a few moments of casual observation.

Suit: The size of the settlement, and also determines the number of extra hole cards drawn for the Hole Phase (below).

Spades

Large: The settlement is bustling, perhaps as the local hub of commerce, justice, or entertainment. It's composed of several streets and large enough to support competition between similar enterprises. There may be more than 1,000 permanent residents living within its borders (but probably less).

Draw two extra hole cards.

Examples: Bustling cattle market. Buffalo hunters' base. City founded by previous generation of settlers. Large military fort. Town with an important railway junction. The county seat. Main winter camp of an Indian tribe.

Hearts

Medium: Your typical western town with a single Main Street—or a settlement of similar size—inhabited by no more than 400 people.

Draw one extra hole card.

Examples: Large ranch. Military outpost. Boomtown. Rail depot and its surroundings. Indian village. Maze pirates' home port. Large wagon stop on important trail.

Diamonds

Small: This settlement is composed of a few buildings, its population no greater than a few dozen.

Draw no extra cards.

Examples: Religious mission. Large farm. Lumber camp. Lonesome mine. Mad scientist's secret laboratory. Strange, secluded mansion of quirky family. Bandit hideout.

Clubs

Tiny: A single building, home to no more than a dozen people—and no less than one.

In a settlement of this size, there is room for only one special place or person. In the Hole Phase, choose only one of your cards to be meaningful—use the other to build a poker hand, but ignore its meaning.

Examples: Lonely cabin. Hunting lodge. Secluded trading post. Stagecoach station. Little house on the prairie. A hermit's cave.

GHOST TOWNS

Value: Purpose and character of the settlement. This establishes why was the place created and what type of people live

there. Of course, not every person in a mining town is a miner—but certainly there are more members of that noble trade than any other.

Deuce

Refuge: The settlement was established by people trying to avoid prosecution. They might be harmless victims of prejudice or rightly feared cultists.

Examples: Religious community governed by charismatic preacher. Town inhabited by members of a minority: Chinese, Polish, disfigured, or all female. Town with no racial or gender segregation whatsoever. City of cannibals.

3-4

Production: Folks of this settlement are the backbone of society: They provide food, ore, precious minerals, or even mass-produced wonders of the New Science. The place is completely dominated by industry.

Examples: Lumber camp. Town in the shadow of a factory and the mansion of its owner. Mining town. Trapper's cabin. Buffalo hunters' camp. Lone farm.

5-9

Commerce: The settlement was created to make a profit—it's a market for commodities from the area, shipped from here by rail or wagon. There are no producers living within the borders, only merchants and providers of important services: barbers, tailors, dentists, and such. And the town has its fair share of entertainers, ready to suck every cent created in healthy commerce.

Examples: Cattle market. Boomtown, addressing to the needs of local miners. Trading post, serving as middle ground for settlers and Indians. Town governed by cruel mayor who pays for the scalps of local Indian tribe members.

10

Transportation: This town is a gateway to the West, a place where folks from the East arrive by rail or Conestoga wagon trains to start their western journeys. Veterans might also come here to find a way out of the frontier's nightmare. Keep in mind that this place serves travelers—settlements created to protect the interests of a rail baron is covered by another category (see below).

Examples: Railroad station. Pony Express field office. Town by the trail. Experimental airfield created by Smith & Robards. River port on the Mississippi.

Jack

Military: There are no proper settlers in this place, only soldiers and civilian outpost staff, guarding something important in the area. Military drills, the chain of command, and army uniforms are the polar opposites of life in a lawless frontier boomtown.

Examples: Cavalry fort. Lone outpost guarded by few men. Secret military laboratory. Naval base in the Maze.

Queen

Rail Baron: War scourges the High Plains—and we don't mean the War Between the States. This settlement was created to serve the needs of a ruthless Rail Baron—it's filled with precious resources, hired guns, and secret weapons to be unleashed on the competition.

Examples: Camp of Iron Dragon workers. Cavalry outpost protecting Dixie Rails trains. Mine owned by Union Blue. Ghost town filled with Bayou Vermilion employees (and walkin' dead!). A Wasatch test field, protected by automatons. Ordinary village terrorized into complete submission by a Black River gang.

King

Government: The town was created to divide and rule the area, and serves as the center of local authority—official or not. In any case, no one in many miles is ready to challenge this settlement's power.

Examples: City with permanent court of law. Hacienda of the territory's richest rancher. Seat of county sheriff. Tiny cabin of a local wise woman who wields terrible power.

Ace

Native: This place is inhabited and governed by Indians. It might be independent, rebellious, or subjugated to the white man's government—but in any case, the natives call it home.

Examples: Indian tribal camp of tipis. Pueblo. Hideout of Apaches fighting white men. Hermitage of a mysterious medicine man.

Joker

Hidden: The purpose of this place is top secret. Nobody who learns the secret can walk free.

Examples: Military operation posing as frontier boomtown. Secret Agency training facility. A villain's base. Mad scientist's hidden laboratory. Gathering place of the Ravenites. The remote cabin where Stone spends his free time fishin' and buildin' ships in bottles.

Middle Card: Nice to See a Familiar Face

The second card determines the local population's outlook and main concerns. This provides a good idea of how the townsfolk might react to a posse's arrival, and what kinds of conversations can be overheard in the local saloon.

Suit: This determines the settlement's general attitude toward

strangers—the initial reaction of townsfolk and general atmosphere of the town. Remember, Marshal, that all important individuals should have reactions of their own. After all, there is at least one friendly person in a town that otherwise greets visitors with slammed doors and shuttered windows.

Spades

"We are all brothers and sisters in this community." The inhabitants of this settlement are friendly to the extreme. For some reason, they are willing to share everything with the posse and are always ready to help. The default reaction of local folks is Friendly.

GHOST TOWNS

Hearts

"Howdy, strangers." In this place, cowpokes are likely to feel like fish in water. Folks are generally nice and polite toward strangers, just as God-fearing people should be, but no more. The default reaction is Neutral.

Diamonds

"Mind your own business, pardner." Sure, folks are ready to consort with strangers, but newcomers shouldn't count on any extra courtesy. Strangers are tolerated, but nobody in their right mind would call the locals "hospitable." The default reaction is Uncooperative.

Clubs

"We don't like strangers 'round here." When heroes ride into this town, they are welcomed with closed doors and evil looks. Locals are suspicious and rude, ready to run off visitors engaging in any sort of misbehavior. Maybe they're not used to visitors, or perhaps they've seen too many strangers of late. They are Hostile, but not willing to initiate violence without serious provocation.

Value: This determines the main local concern of mundane origin. It's not necessarily the central theme of

the adventure, more a source of flavor and potential topic of conversations with the locals.



Deuce

Persecution: The population of this settlement is persecuted for some reason, or persecutes someone else. In the former case, saddletramps should be prepared to hear laments over the persecutors' cruelties. If the latter, heroes might witness verbal bashing of perceived inferiors, or maybe even a witch-hunt.

Examples: Town of religious folks, harassed by cynical cattle baron. Camp of devoted Indian followers of a prophet ridiculed by most tribes. Jayhawkers' city, always ready to shoot some Rebs. Cavalry fort filled with bigoted soldiers, tormenting black members of the regiment.

3-4

Wilderness: This settlement lies in a particularly wild part of the West, and its dwellers struggle constantly with rough weather, hostile animals, transportation troubles, and so forth.

Examples: Isolated mountain village, cut off from the civilization by snow for most of the year. Desert mission where water is as sacred as the sacraments. Lumber camp haunted by vicious, feral wolves.

5-9

Welfare: The locals are poor and cannot deal with cruel fate without constant complaining. Or they were recently enriched, and enjoy rubbing their newfound wealth in visitors' faces.

Examples: A town struggling after the local mine is depleted. A farm on the railway route, trying to raise its value. Strategically located port in the Maze, courted by local warlord with money and luxury items.

10

Crime: This place is endangered by bandits, or provides refuge to hunted outlaws. Or maybe streets of the city are haunted by a serial killer of unknown identity.

Examples: Remote cabin, headquarters of a dangerous gang. Trading post serving as fence for stolen goods. Town whose marshal was gunned down by a roaming pistolero.

Jack

Corruption: Someone in the city turns a blind eye to suspicious activity after being bribed. Or a local judge accepts money to issue favorable verdicts—and his corrupt ways are public knowledge.

Examples: City mayor was bribed to grant a particular railway the right-of-way. Corrupt county sheriff extorts money for "protection." On a simple farm, any outlaw can find haven—for a price.

Queen

Scandal: This community is shaken by outrageous scandal—maybe the preacher's daughter ran away with the handsome stranger, or the good doctor was caught disemboweling a patient.

Examples: Fiercely independent newspaper owner exposed as front man for the mining company. Son of an Indian chief abandons the Old Ways and attends the white man's university. Supposedly honorable cavalry officer has dalliances with a number of married women.

King

Warfare: The settlement serves as stage for a large-scale conflict between honest, hard-working settlers and a local power figure, or between governments' or Rail Barons' forces.

Examples: Independent stock growers versus all-powerful cattle baron. Two Rail Barons duke it out over a local rail spur, with the townsfolk stuck in the middle. Union or CSA military—represented by a cruel colonel—versus local settlers and peaceful Indians. Ranchers and homesteaders in a fight to the death for prime acreage. Two towns struggle to become the county seat. Miners do battle with claim jumpers.

Ace

Natives: The conflict is with local Indians. The Indians might be hostile, harassing townsfolk without mercy, or peaceful and persecuted by white settlers.

Examples: Indians try to preserve their traditional lands from a greedy lumber company. The road to town is haunted by rogue Indian bandits, claiming to be a war party sent by the local tribe. Firebrand preacher orders the baptism or extermination of all Indians in the area.

Joker

Posse: The place is so remote, peaceful, or boring that the posse's arrival is the only interesting event in months. Everyone's talking about the strange visitors, and try to befriend them or uncover their life stories.

Depending on the general attitude toward strangers, the locals might be annoyingly friendly, taking the posse for some kind of folk heroes, or paranoid, suspecting them of the most heinous crimes.

Right Card: Somethin' Wicked, Somethin' Weird

Every Western settlement should have its portion of *weird*, Marshal, so it's high time we establish the source of supernatural trouble haunting the town. Weirdness provides a reason for heroes to intervene and a main theme for local adventures.

The evil may or may not be related to the chief local concern established by the Middle Card. To create a link between them, either assign the supernatural evil as the source of the settlement's trouble, or disguise the supernatural threat as the mundane

one. For example, a monstrous cult could blame local Indians for its ritual killings, or the Indians' hostility could be a direct response to the cult's misdeeds.

To create the most ordinary of towns, skip this step. Instead, promote the Middle Card's mundane concern to main theme for this adventure.

Suit: The evil's roots. Manitous rarely arrive uninvited; the supernatural troubles harassing good townsfolk are usually rooted in some shameful human activity...



Spades

Shameful past: The settlement was founded on some original sin. The truth lies buried under lies and deceptions—or was forgotten and modern settlers have no idea why they are harassed by the ghosts of the past (metaphorical, or quite literal).

Examples: The town was founded by two brothers who murdered the third during a quarrel over the place's name. Before the first rancher settled here, she studied magic under an evil witch. The original founders were cultists, but they abandoned their cult some time ago in hopes the demon they summoned will never return.

Hearts

Ignorant wrongdoing: Someone in the settlement accidentally unleashed unspeakable evil. He or she may not know they're the one to blame. The results of an evil act are apparent—a monster, curse, pile of dead bodies, or somesuch—but the posse needs to find the guilty party before the supernatural events cease.

Examples: Young man tried to hex the girl who shunned him with a love charm, but instead allowed a manitou to possess her. The settlement was built upon a sealed portal to the Hunting Grounds. A poor, hungry group of Indians the settlers helped all winter were in fact Ravenites.

Diamonds

Servant of evil: Someone in the settlement is a servant—directly or indirectly—of the Reckoners. Hiding amongst common folk, the servant of evil causes harm and provokes fear. He differs from the ignorant wrongdoer insofar as he's painfully aware of his own evil, sometimes recognizing it as a painful necessity, sometimes embracing the darkness with an open—yet black—heart.

Examples: Preacher's obsession with chastity turns him into a serial killer, gutting soiled doves. Saloon owner invites demons to gamble for souls in his joint, in exchange for eternal youth. To find a universal cure, a local doctor experiments on patients and makes them walkin' dead after they die horrible deaths. A vainglorious renown-seeker attracts monsters to the area to secure a job as town protector.

Clubs

Terrifying fearmonger: The place is haunted by a creature straight out of the worst nightmares—a fearmonger. The monster might be hidden in the settlement during the day and leave its hideout each night to wreak havoc. Or it might live in the nearby wilds, visiting the settlement each full moon to claim a human sacrifice. In any case, it's a horrible creature of pure evil. The locals fears it more than anything.

Examples: A wife, murdered by her insanely jealous husband, returns from the grave as a vengeful ghost. Local nurse invents scary shadow creatures to keep children in line; the shadows take material form and terrify little ones for real. A feral beast of Indian legends lives deep in the woods, killing lumberjacks and nature lovers.

Joker

Draw again and use second card's suit. In this case, the Joker serves only as the value (see below).

RANDOM FEAR LEVELS

The local Fear Level is a convenient tool, insofar as it gives a general sense of how difficult encounters will be during play. Usually, the Fear Level should be calibrated based on a posse's average Rank and how hard the Marshal wants Guts checks to be. But if random is what you need, draw a single card and check the suit against the table below.

Suit	Fear Modifier
Spades	Hidden Threat: Subtract 1 from the local Fear Level.
Hearts	S o m e t h i n ' Wicked: Use local Fear Level.
Diamonds	T e r r i f y i n ' Presence: Add 1 to the local Fear Level.
Clubs	Rule o' Terror: Add 2 to the local Fear Level.
Joker	Hellmouth: Add 3 to the local Fear Level (maximum 5).

Step Two: Hole Phase

All right, Marshal—we've established the general character of the town, and exactly why an intrepid posse should care about it. It's time to populate the area with interesting folks and places for them to dwell.

Remember those hole cards from Step One? We dealt two at the beginning and possibly drew one or two more during the Community Phase. Now check the values of all your hole cards against the following table, Marshal. Choose two to serve as the most important elements in the adventure. For a tiny settlement—big enough for only one special person or place—use only one hole card.

People and places chosen in this step are meant to be exceptional and worth a posse's attention. But they're not the only ones in the settlement. Use the values of your additional hole cards to determine the other important establishments in town. They're just fairly ordinary, and not a focus of the story at hand. Use the **Establishments** sidebar (page 102) to round out the 'burg's offerings, either by random roll or choosing what makes sense.



Suit: The exact suit doesn't matter this time, just the color. A red card means something good—perhaps a potential ally or place of refuge—and a black one means trouble, as shown for each result below.

Value: The value determines the purpose of the place or profession of the person, and provides a slew of examples to get your mind working, Marshal. At first

glance, some of these might contradict the general purpose of the settlement from Step One, but take some time to consider how each might fit in. A military outpost could certainly feature a barber shop. A rough and tumble boomtown might house a fine art gallery funded by rich and somewhat idealistic widow. Unusual combinations make for unique settlements.

Deuce

Crime: The person or place is somehow associated with illegal activities.

Black: Dishonest lawman, framing strangers for his crimes. Former leader of a gang, trying to avenge his fallen comrades. Inconspicuous Chinese laundry owner, running a protection racket and involved with opium trade. Hotel owned by charming cannibals. Labyrinth of underground caverns, filled with Mexican outlaws guarding lost treasure. Dishonest attorney's office employing crooked tinhorns to defend the worst criminals.

Red: Unscrupulous yet heroic saloon owner, willing to do whatever it takes to protect his town. Wrongly accused gunman looking to clear his name. A Harrowed regains Dominion and seeks an opportunity to redeem himself after the manitou's killing spree. A no-questions-asked boarding house with a strict non-violence policy. Secret room in the casino, where one can overhear any conversation in the place. Smuggler's tunnels, leading out of a Maze port's trouble.

- 3 **Exploration:** The settlement's surroundings are mysterious and perhaps a little dangerous. The unknown waits to be explored.

***Black:** An esteemed pilot, insanely protective of his routes through the Maze and willing to kill to protect his secrets. A mountain man visits town once a year to replenish his supplies—and kidnap another woman. An obsessed prospector suspects everyone as a claim jumper. Unexplored network of caves beneath the city, filled with dangerous critters. The pass leading out of a mountain town is blocked by heavy snow and haunted by strange beasts. Dense forest full of vicious animals, and even more vicious bandits.*

***Red:** An army scout who knows the area like the back of his hand. A brave explorer seeking volunteers to participate in yet another expedition. The old drunk is the only living person who knows the way to Aztec gold, hidden by greedy Spaniards two centuries ago. Enormous deposit of ghost rock in an unexplored cavern near the town. Undiscovered trail, ready to be blazed. The perfect hideout, accessible but hidden from sight.*

- 4 **Transportation:** This point of interest is related to the shipment of goods and people into and out of the settlement.

***Black:** A greedy mayor is ready to sell all the town's land and citizens to Baron LaCroix. Telegraph owner, spying for a railroad company and twisting messages for their purposes. A guide leads travelers out of town to their certain demise. Elegant delivery service making a profit by stealing goods sent by customers, and blaming Indian raiders. A Maze port where the unwary are conscripted into the Mexican armada against their will. An old covered bridge, infamous for being haunted by bandits and outlaws.*

***Red:** A young and capable Pony Express rider. The idealistic scientist who works hard to improve a rail engine. Tough stagecoach driver who knows all the local gossip. That derailed, abandoned club car is an ideal place to spend a night or two. Railway company office in need of protection for good pay. Best livery and blacksmith in the territory.*

- 5 **Nourishment:** This place or inhabitant is somehow connected to the production, sale, or consumption of food.

***Black:** An eloquent killer who's also a connoisseur of human liver. Dishonest and unscrupulous food broker in a starving region of the Great Maze. French chef determined to make the town a classy place by removing all troublemakers with deadly force. A blueberry grove frequently visited by deadly, venomous snakes. Restaurant feeds customers horse meat, stolen from a nearby livery. Cattle ranch constantly harassed by feral dogs that kill livestock and guards.*

***Red:** Foul-mouthed mama, feeding all the poor in her joint. Chili Queen adored by cowboys from the area. An old trapper who can make a proper meal out of anything. The one and only apple orchard in the area. The best damn restaurant in West. Cabin on the edge of the town where quality, home-made liquor can be bought at any time of day.*

6

Commerce: Someone in the city is making money hand over fist.

***Black:** A ruthless smuggler who made the city dependent on her shipments, now squeezes from it every dollar she can. The general store owner has seven adult sons and stands ready to chase out any competition. A Miners' Union willing to ensure its privileges with violence. a rich and dangerous mine, ready to collapse any moment. A Bank that takes advantage of illiterate customers.*

***Red:** The tough rancher with a heart of gold who provides jobs for the area's poor. A mad scientist seeks wealthy businessmen to fund her research. A rich widow who sponsors the local school, orphanage, and hospital. Closed club for the privileged and powerful, where heroes are always welcomed. A charity center that feeds and clothes the poor. An honest claims office that safeguards the interests of hard-working prospectors.*

7

Services: The town provides fine services: Offices of tailors, cobblers, barbers, photographers, and other businesses are numerous, where miners or cowboys can spend some hard-earned cash.

***Black:** A barber who slices the throats of his customers. A photographer blackmails the local elite with pictures taken in brothels with his Epitaph camera. A jeweler who sells worthless trinkets to gullible frontier folks. A pawn shop full of El Cheapo gear sold as new equipment. The bathhouse sells overheard snippets of conversation to local muckrakers. A smithy works with outlaws by marking the horseshoes of rich and potentially defenseless clients.*

***Red:** A pain-free dentist. The gunsmith who has extensive knowledge of monsters, and makes custom bullets capable of hurting them. A wily bootblack who's ready to provide important information and bits of practical wisdom. An elegant ladies' shop with Parisian confections. Chinese laundry where martial arts are taught in a back room. A Smith & Robards field outpost.*

8

Spiritual Concerns: In the Weird West, providers of spiritual services are generally held in highest regard.

***Black:** A fake medicine man who cons Indian tribes with false prophecies. A rabbi obsessed with the idea of creating a golem to punish unbelievers. Bernadine monk readies catholic population of the town for coming of Santa Anna's army. Sinister cemetery infested with ghouls. The ancient Indian burial ground makes walkin' dead out of anyone laid to rest in it. An evil cult's temple is hidden in the general store's basement.*

***Red:** A kindly undertaker sneaks persecuted people out of town in coffins. A wise Chinese elder who supplies ancient Oriental wisdom. The charismatic preacher lowers the local Fear Level with sermons full of hope and comfort. Th church stands on holy ground, so no monster can enter. A hotel built with an Indian totem pole as its main support, and protected by its spirits. A great, outdoor medicine wheel.*

9

Health Care: The West is full of illness and injuries. No town can do without a good doctor for long.

Black: An equally mad and evil scientist, who experiments on humans. Insane doctor who performs unnecessary amputations and preserves his “trophies” in alcohol. Nurse poisons patients who—in her opinion—are suffering beyond help. A well of tainted water that gradually drives drinkers insane. Orphanage funded by a mad scientist who uses it to test new drugs on the children. A drug store where the secret ingredient of every drug is opium—and the city is nearly addicted.

Red: Iconic drunken doctor with a bad temper and a heart of gold. The first female doctor in the state. An old Indian medicine man who tends patients the local doctor can’t heal. A hospital for Great Rail Wars victims, funded by the local stagecoach company. A farm where ailing horses regain their strength. Home for elderly, poor, and lonesome cowboys.

10

Knowledge: In a land of illiterate cowboys, violent gunmen, primitive mountain men, and Indians cleaving to the Old Ways, people and places of knowledge are of special value.

Black: The bookstore owner sells dark tomes to youngsters. A mad scientist seeks opportunities to test his brand-new death ray. The town elder who obscures local history to cover his own past sins. A library with dangerous books of black magic and demon summoning hidden deep in the stacks. A school where children are tormented and mistreated to generate Fear. Remote farm where an Explorer’s Society esthete studies dangerous monsters he acquires through sinister means.

Red: A kindhearted heir to the ancient British aristocracy has a marvelous private library full of obscure books. Teacher who opposes the racial prejudices within and without her class. An old wife who’s full of local wisdom and genealogical knowledge. The military cartography office, where soldiers are curious and helpful. Tipi with the history of an Indian tribe painted on its inside. Local newspaper archive covering five solid years of town history.

Jack

Justice: Frontier justice is quick and unforgiving. In this settlement the law takes its course—for better or worse.

Black: A self-righteous teenage girl, aching to deliver justice to her father’s murderers and willing to believe anyone’s guilty. An agreeable judge who’s a little too fond of letting villains walk free. A stubborn, malicious judge who’s a little too fond of hanging innocent men. Trigger-happy lawman who uses his post to settle private scores. The over-strict reformatory reforms rebellious youths into full-blown outlaws. At the state prison inmates are subject to weird experiments.

Red: The kid witnessed a robbery and is hiding from the bandits, waiting for a judge to arrive. Private investigator who takes any case the county sheriff neglects. A marshal who’s willing to believe the posse’s version of a story. A secure and humane prison. The county archive maintains files of all criminal cases from the last decade. A permanent courthouse with its own offices, jail, and gallows.

Queen

Entertainment: Who would a deny hard-working farmhand, miner, or cowboy his or her portion of entertainment? Saloons, gambling dens, dance halls, and their ilk are common sights in the West.

Black: A soiled dove who kidnaps her customers to sell to a local gang. The barman tells a local villain juicy details about the posse. A pair of gamblers who work together to run swindles masked as games of chance. A dance hall infested with pick-pockets. The illegal fight club forces strangers to do battle in bloody duels for the audience's amusement.

Red: A virtuoso pianist hides out in the local brothel from assassins hired by a competitor Back East. Barman who tells the posse juicy details about a local villain. Chinese fireworks maker who provides the posse with any special effects they may need. Theatre with professional thespians and quality productions. Gallery of fine art, established by local person of substance. Casino that robs the rich blind and lets the poor win.

King

Authority: Many frontier towns do just fine without any governance, or some old coot takes the title of mayor to brighten his waning years. Here, authority and civil services hold strong.

Black: Evil mayor who holds his office by fear, challenging opposition to deadly gunfights. Warmongering Indian chief eager to kill white settlers. A cruel colonel confiscates most local food production for the army. An imposing town hall, built with bloody money taken from the poor. A shantytown where the persecuted minority is forced to live. A secret government prison for politically inconvenient inmates.

Red: A journalist who takes this whole "fourth estate" business very seriously. The good preacher holds power and is determined to make the town a paradise on Earth. A fire-brigade chief who jumps into any danger if his town is threatened. A council of the town's war widows meets once a month in the coffeehouse, passing laws to preserve peace within the town limits. A statue of the town's founder stands in the town square, providing mysterious inspiration to those who seek it.

Ace

Outsider: This very interesting aspect of town came from outside its borders, and is just passing through.

Black: The Harrowed gunman—who bears a worrisome resemblance to a man called Stone—is passing through town, on the hunt for some other hero. A renowned outlaw takes his time in the local brothel. Snake oil salesman who works his charms in the town square. Traveling freak show kidnaps, terrorizes, and abandons orphans along the road. An infected cattle herd driven by rough and tumble, constantly drunk cowboys. The mobile brothel's girls steal from customers.

Red: A war hero travels the area in search of former soldiers who need his aid. Saleswoman of rare goods and curiosities who visits town periodically. A real-live Western celebrity! An honest candidate for governor visits town on his campaign tour. Traveling eye doctor's office makes a monthly route of all the county's towns. A genuine circus, with rare animals, clowns, and acrobats.

Joker

Weird: Since *weirdness* was covered in Step One, we mostly avoided it here. The Joker indicates an independent supernatural being or place in the settlement, possibly unconnected to the source of Fear.

Black: A villainous card sharp who gambles for opponents' souls. The sinister voodoo bokor is followed by suspicious bodyguards, their movements a bit too stiff. In human form a werewolf has the manners of a perfect gentleman, but he's unable to control the curse. A ghost train arrives at the railway station every full moon. A vampire-infested brothel. The cursed hotel inflicts bloody nightmares on all its guests.

Red: A supernaturally skilled healer heals injuries thought permanent. Old gypsy woman who foretells possible futures. A mysterious Chinese doctor writes down powerful spells on little slips of paper, to be used by the patient later. A still lake covered by mysterious mist sends visions of things past. The sacred tree protects an Indian village from foul weather. The curiosity shop sells minor Relics.

Step Three: Poker Phase

The adventure's outlines should be coming into sharper resolve, Marshal. Now let's finish it up by adding a complication to the story elements you've already determined. Exactly how this rather generic complication plays into the drama depends on what works best for

the plot, but it should certainly arise as an important element of solving the problem.

Choose five cards from among all your hole cards and community cards, and use them to create the best possible poker hand—Jokers are wild. Compare the result to the table below, and figure out how the element best fits your tale.

High Card

Enemy Mine: The heroes must work with folks they consider enemies to solve the problem.

Pair

Hunt: Before the posse deal with the trouble, they have to track and catch it—or find a tracker to help them.

Jacks or better

Time Limit: If the evil isn't defeated or contained within a certain timeframe—usually a short one—things get a damn sight worse.

Two Pair

Investigation: The posse must uncover hidden evil by collecting clues and connecting the dots.

Three of a Kind

Weakness: The trouble has but one solution—a supernatural weakness. The secret must be uncovered to solve the problem.

Straight

Intrigue: The main concern is the social class where the trouble occurs, or of the wrongdoer. Appearances must be maintained.

Flush

Trap: To catch the villain, the posse must set a trap. Or perhaps a trap is being set for them...

Full House

Sacrifice: The posse has to sacrifice something or someone they hold dear, or convince an NPC to do the same, if they want to win.

Four of a Kind

Rivals: The posse can't do it alone—even if they want to. A group of rivals races the posse to the solution, or merely tries to prevent the heroes' success.

Straight Flush

Hunting Grounds: Nothing on God's green Earth can stop this evil. The solution lies somewhere in the shadowy Hunting Grounds.

FINISHING TOUCHES

Now, Marshal, you've got the broad strokes of a Western settlement, including the inhabitants and points of interest most likely to play a part in your group's adventure. Let's wrap 'er all up by add a few finishing touches: the local peculiarities and distinctive name that set this place apart from others.

Distinguishing Mark

This step is simple: Count up how many cards you have of each suit, and figure out which one numbers the most. Consult the winning suit's entry below to figure out what distinguishes the town.

In the unlikely event of an equal amount of each suit, consider the town a *weirdness magnet*—it attracts supernatural events like a cow patty draws flies. It also attracts gossip-hungry muckrakers, self-important do-gooders, and secret government operatives by the gross. Perhaps one of the locals disappears each full moon and is never seen again, maybe strange lights appear in the sky with alarming regularity, the dead don't

stay buried, or the saloon owner displays a "genuine mermaid" in the back room for a modest price. Heck, maybe all these things are true. Let your most fiendish imagination run wild, Marshal.

♠ **Proud Past:** The settlement was founded on the site of famous historical event or built near an important site. Maybe the town's foundin' fathers were butchered during the Civil War, or the town famously defended itself against the Native tribes' rage. Maybe it was established by Francisco Coronado or during Lewis and Clark's expedition. Perhaps it lies near an important battlefield, a place of Indian martyrdom, or the lonely shack where Jacob Smith built his first wondrous invention.

♥ **Famous Folks:** One of the settlement's folks—living or deceased—has gained some degree of fame or notoriety. Maybe the town's lawman is a famous gunman hired for the job, a successfully retired prospector lives in a mansion built with her amassed riches, or a veteran scout tells stories in the saloon. Could be a legend of the West is buried in the local cemetery.



♠ **Testament to Human Genius:** One or more structures in the settlement provoke awe and wonder. This might be a magnificent church, modern saloon powered by wonders of the New Science, glorious railway station, pneumatic tube system, art gallery, hotel designed by famous architect, or modern printing press.

♣ **Marvel of Nature:** The settlement lies in the proximity of a natural wonder, such as a marvelous waterfall, oddly-shaped rock, giant redwood tree, perfectly round and clear lake, strange canyon, bottomless chasm, or petrified forest.

A Town by Any Other Name...

...would probably smell just as bad, on account of all the mud and filth strewn about. But the town needs a sweet-smelling name nonetheless. Here are several easy ways to baptize your strange locale:

Biblical: Take a more or less obscure place from the Bible, which shows the townsfolk's piety: Hebron, Sidon, or Moriah.

Book-Learnin': Highlight the city founder's classical education with an

ancient name like Thebes, Amphipolis, or Hadrian's Well.

Eponymous: Maybe the town's founder named it after himself or his beloved: Whateley, Wayne, or Daisy Town.

Francais: Back East, towns don't hesitate to honor their French origins with names like Angouleme, Belleville, and LeRoy.

Geography: Name the town after the most prominent feature of the local landscape, like Twin Hills, Golden Creek, or Coffin Rock.

Nostalgia: Use a name the original settlers brought with them from the Old World—Breslau, New Limerick, or Firenze.

Purpose: The town's name describes its main feature or purpose, like Ghost Rock, Green Fields, or Lumber Town.

Spanish West: In the Southwest use an Hispanic name, preferably a Catholic saint—such as San Leticia, San Bartolome, or Santa Librada.

Values: Stress the locals' moral rectitude and hopeful attitude with a name like Absolution, Chastity, or Deliverance.

Encounters

The dark power of the Reckoning dropped a veil of terror over the Weird West. In its shadows abominations spawn, taking life from the fearful tales told of their hideous atrocities. With so many tales being told, new critters and vile beasts are springin' up all over the place. It's only natural we give you the lowdown, Marshal.

Most of the abominations and human characters in this chapter are keyed to specific locales and situations, but that doesn't mean you can't use them elsewhere, Marshal. *Deadlands: Ghost Towns* is assembled much like the "toolbox" format used in most of our Plot Point books, making it easy to pull apart and put back together in whatever way works best for your campaign.

Although we've presented a fair amount of detail for each town, we've also left a lot unsaid, or merely suggested. That's so you can make each town your own, Marshal, and weave your own tales—as well as the player characters' backstories—into the tapestry of your campaign.

CREEPY CRITTERS

All critters big and little abound in the forgotten corners of the Weird West. The following section presents the varmints of our *Ghost Towns*, and later on we get to the people (some of them possible allies) dwelling in them. As always, Wild Cards are denoted with a marshal's badge, like this one right here:



Lightnin' Man

With the advent of the Hope Falls Power Generator, folks started in to spinning tales about the dark side of electricity—primarily its ability to burn a man to a crisp. Pretty soon the tales weren't about the raw energy, they'd changed subtly into stories about a "Lightnin' Man."

A cracklin' white bolt of energy with a mean streak, tales say the Lightning Man'll get anyone who works on the power lines, anyone using electricity in their home, even folks who get too close to a lamp post at night. From these tales and the Reckoning's shadows coalesced the being that now haunts Hope Falls' power lines.

For now The Lightnin' Man is a unique creature, but if its legend persists as electric power spreads, more could spawn across the Weird West.

Attributes: Agility d10, Smarts d8, Spirit d8, Strength d4, Vigor d12

Skills: Fighting d10, Notice d8, Stealth d10

Pace: 8; **Parry:** 7; **Toughness:** 8

Special Abilities:

- **Fear:** The blinding sight of the cracklin' Lightnin' Man provokes a Guts check.
- **Invulnerability:** The Lightnin' Man is largely unaffected by physical attacks, except those incorporating its Weakness. It can be Shaken, but not wounded.
- **Lightnin' Bolt:** The Lightnin' Man can project a bolt o' lightning to smite foes. This works like the bolt power, but inflicts 2d8 damage, is activated with

Agility, has AP 2, and costs no Power Points. If a target is carrying more than 10 pounds of conductive metal, in contact with water, or otherwise touching an electrical conductor of some kind, he takes 3d8 damage.

- **Shock o' Your Life:** With a Touch attack (+2), the Lightnin' Man delivers a powerful stroke of electricity that deals 2d6 damage, or 3d6 damage to a target in contact with water.
- **Wire Travel:** Pace 20. The Lightning Man can speed through power lines at a remarkable clip.
- **Weakness (Magic):** Arcane powers and abilities affect the Lightnin' Man normally.
- **Weakness (Rubber):** The Lightnin' Man cannot move through or across non-conductive substances. A weapon made of rubber inflicts normal damage.
- **Coup (Joy Buzzer):** A Harrowed who makes a meal of the Lightnin' Man's essence gains the ability to deal foes—or friends!—a painful jolt once per day. With a Touch attack (+2), the charge is delivered. The target has to make a Vigor roll or be at -2 Parry until his next action, due to painful muscle spasms.



Manitou

These are the evil spirits most likely to wriggle through into the physical world for a few days' jaunt. Each day a manitou exists in the real world, it must make a Spirit roll. With a success it remains another day, and on a failure it fades back into the Hunting Grounds. They are extremely creative in their cruelty.

Attributes: Agility d8, Smarts d6, Spirit d10, Strength d8, Vigor d8

Skills: Fighting d8, Guts d10, Intimidation d10, Persuasion d10, Stealth d8, Taunt d6

Pace: 8; **Parry:** 6; **Toughness:** 8

Special Abilities:

- **Bite:** Str+d6.
- **Camouflage:** Manitou have the ability to blend into their surroundings—literally. Anyone encountering a manitou must succeed on a Smarts roll opposed by the manitou's Stealth or be surprised (see *Savage Worlds*).
- **Fear (-1):** The sight of a manitou provokes a Guts check (-1).
- **Possession:** A manitou in the physical world can take control of an inanimate object—a chair, sheet, tree, or even a knife—and use it as its "body" for the duration of its stay.
- **Rend:** A manitou's favorite tactic is to literally rip its foes in half. If two manitous successfully Grapple a single foe, they can act in concert to tear him apart. The manitous make a single cooperative Strength roll, opposed by the victim's Strength. If they're successful the manitous do Str+2d6, or Str+3d6 with a raise. An Incapacitating wound delivered in this fashion tears a body part from its socket—roll on the Injury Table to figure out which one.
- **Size +2:** Manitous stand about eight feet tall when in humanoid shape.



Manitoy

Kind of like a manitou, manitoys aren't all that fearsome in and of themselves, but when they attack in groups of three or four, singling out one cowpoke at a time, they can be deadly. Manitoys prefer to keep their dark nature hidden as long as they're able, whispering their dark dreams, since fighting gets them nothing. But when they're forced to, they swarm over targets with biting teeth.

Attributes: Agility d4, Smarts d4, Spirit d4, Strength d6, Vigor d6

Skills: Fighting d4, Intimidation d8, Notice d4, Stealth d6



Pace: 4; **Parry:** 5; **Toughness:** 3

Special Abilities:

- **Bite:** Str+d4.
- **Construct:** +2 to recover from being Shaken; no additional damage from called shots; constructs do not suffer from poison or disease.
- **Fearless:** Manitoys are immune to Fear and Intimidation.
- **Improved Dodge:** Attackers' Shooting and Throwing rolls suffer a -2 penalty, and the toys add +2 to Agility rolls to evade area of effect attacks.
- **Size -2:** The toys are small, most no larger than a grown man's fist.
- **Small:** Anyone attacking these toys suffers -2 to their rolls.
- **Whispering Will:** The toys are capable of "whispering" to a target, giving glimpses of the hellish Deadlands. Success on an Intimidation roll—at +2 if the target has the Young Hindrance—opposed by a cowpoke's Guts means the toy breaks the target's will, forcing her to roll on the Fright Table. With a raise on the Intimidation roll, the Fright Table roll is made at +2.



Jolene Amsler

As a child of Mythos and a descendant of the legendary Count Dracula, Jolene Amsler is more of a "cinematic vampire" than others in the Weird West, Marshal. She still looks human most of the time, her monstrous features emerging only when she's attacked or is preparing to feed. Then her eyes turn black, with a faint red gleam, and her fangs and nails lengthen. At her best she's quite fetching, but at her worst she's one ugly so-and-so.

Attributes: Agility d8, Smarts d10, Spirit d10, Strength d12+2, Vigor d12

Skills: Fighting d10, Intimidation d12, Notice d8, Shooting d8, Swimming d8, Throwing d8

Pace: 10; **Parry:** 7; **Toughness:** 10

Special Abilities:

- **Change Form:** As an action, a vampire can change into a wolf or bat with a Smarts roll at -2. Changing back into humanoid form requires a Smarts roll.
- **Charm:** Vampires can use the puppet power on the opposite sex using their Smarts as their arcane skill. They can cast and maintain the power indefinitely, but may only affect one target at a time.

- **Claws:** Str+d6.
- **Fear (-2):** When their true form is revealed, these bloodsuckers exude an aura of pure malevolence that forces all who see it to make a Guts check (-2).
- **Improved Frenzy:** Vampires may make two attacks per round without penalty.
- **Invulnerability:** Vampires can only be harmed by their Weaknesses. They may be Shaken by other attacks, but never wounded.
- **Level Headed:** Vampires act on the best of two cards.
- **Sire:** Anyone slain by a vampire rises as a lesser vampire in 1d4 days, under the control of its creator.
- **Speed:** Vampires are incredibly fast, and roll a d10 running die.
- **Undead:** +2 Toughness; +2 to recover from being Shaken; called shots do no extra damage (except to the heart—see below). No wound penalties.
- **Weakness (Sunlight):** Vampires catch fire if any part of their skin is exposed to direct sunlight. After that they suffer 2d10 damage per round until they are dust. Armor does not protect.
- **Weakness (Holy Symbol):** A character may keep a vampire at bay by displaying a holy symbol. A vampire who wants to directly attack the victim must beat her in an opposed test of Spirit.
- **Weakness (Holy Water):** A vampire sprinkled with holy water is Fatigued. If immersed, he combusts as if it were direct sunlight (see above).
- **Weakness (Stake Through the Heart):** A vampire hit with a called shot to the heart (-4) must make a Vigor roll versus the damage total. If successful, it takes damage normally. If it fails, it disintegrates to dust.
- **Coup (Toughened Up):** The Harrowed's body becomes more

resilient if he draws in a greater vampire's essence, granting +2 to recover from being Shaken (cumulative with Combat Reflexes).



Stefan Amsler

Stefan was made a vampire by Jolene, and thus is a lesser vampire subject to her absolute control. Even though he's fairly "young" in vampire years, very little of his humanity remains. His powers are far less potent than Jolene's. But he's similarly fearsome when he bares his fangs to attack.

Attributes: Agility d8, Smarts d8, Spirit d8, Strength d12+1, Vigor d10

Skills: Fighting d8, Intimidation d8, Notice d6, Shooting d6, Swimming d8, Throwing d6

Pace: 10; **Parry:** 6; **Toughness:** 9

Special Abilities:

- **Claws:** Str+d6.
- **Fear:** When their true form is revealed, these bloodsuckers exude an aura of pure malevolence that forces all who see it to make a Guts check.
- **Frenzy:** Lesser vampires can make two attacks per round with a -2 penalty to each attack.
- **Level Headed:** Lesser vampires act on the best of two cards.
- **Invulnerability:** Lesser vampires can only be harmed by their Weaknesses. They may be Shaken by other attacks, but never wounded.
- **Sire:** Anyone slain by a lesser vampire has a 50% chance of rising as a vampire himself in 1d4 days.
- **Speed:** Lesser vampires are incredibly fast, and roll a d10 running die.
- **Undead:** +2 Toughness; +2 to recover from being Shaken; called shots do no extra damage (except to the heart—see below).
- **Weakness (Sunlight):** Vampires catch fire if any part of their skin is exposed to direct sunlight. After that they

suffer 2d10 damage per round until they are dust. Armor does not protect.

- **Weakness (Holy Symbol):** A character with a holy symbol may keep a vampire at bay by displaying a holy symbol. A vampire who wants to directly attack the victim must beat her in an opposed test of Spirit.
- **Weakness (Holy Water):** A vampire sprinkled with holy water is Fatigued. If immersed, he combusts as if it were direct sunlight (see above).
- **Weakness (Invitation Only):** Vampires cannot enter a private dwelling without being invited. They may enter public domains as they please.
- **Weakness (Stake Through the Heart):** A vampire hit with a called shot to the heart (-4) must make a Vigor roll versus the damage. If successful, it takes damage normally. If it fails, it disintegrates to dust.

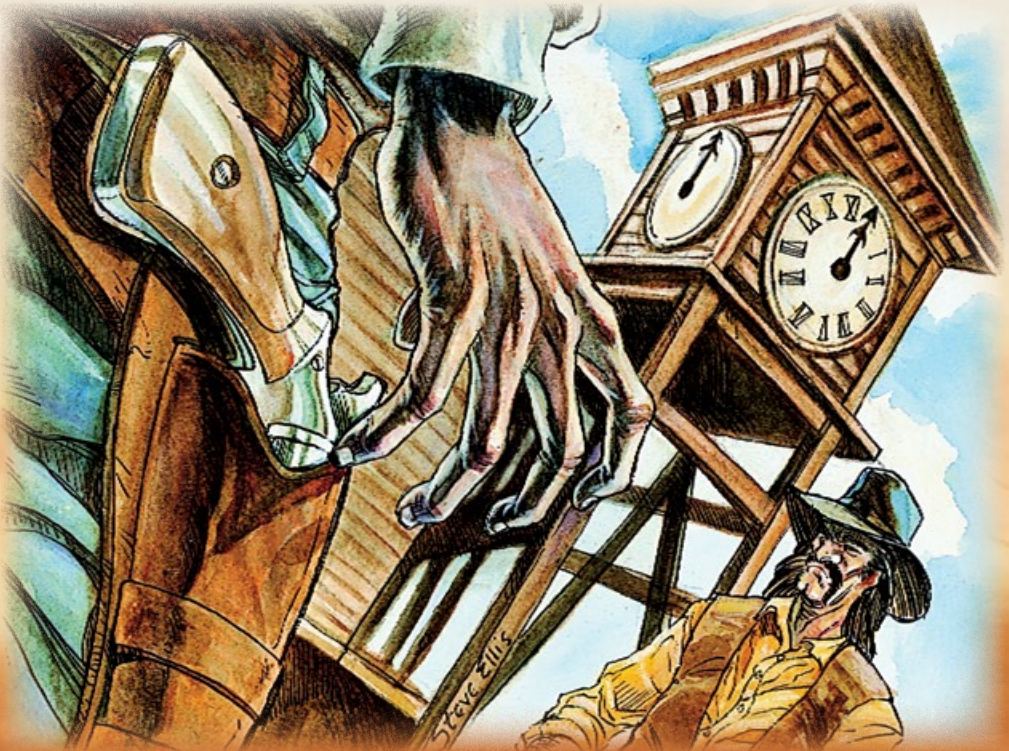
FRIENDS & FOES

Here are a number of folks looking to make an impression on your heroes—some good, and some decidedly bad. A few of them wield prodigious powers, so be careful about setting them loose on a low-Rank posse that's not ready for them.

Unless otherwise stated, Arcane Background (Black Magic) works exactly like Arcane Background (Magic) from the *Savage Worlds* rulebook and grants access to any power the Marshal prefers. Folks who know black magic have willingly given themselves and their souls to evil in return for a measure of infernal power. Which is to say they've gone *bad* and they've got no regrets to speak of.

Grit

Wild Card NPCs have Grit equal to half their number of Edges (rounded down), to a minimum of 1 and maximum of 5. If



an NPC has an Edge, Hindrance, or other ability that directly modifies Grit (like the True Grit Edge, Tenderfoot Hindrance, or being Harrowed), don't count it toward the total number of Edges, and apply any modifiers after you halve the total. That way every cowpoke gets his due, Marshal.



Aldo Derringer

After discarding his Amazing Augmented Man, Fully Autonomous Walker, and Wondrous Weathersphere projects, Aldo is on the verge of a true breakthrough. Diverting some of the flow from the Hope Falls Power Generator, he's completed a prototype of an electric cannon. This complex and devastating weapon needs only to have its power source miniaturized to be viable—an ideal reason to open up trade with Sheltonsville (a source to replenish his rapidly depleting supply of ghost rock). Problem is, as Derringer diverts power and resources to the electric cannon, the deal with Sheltonsville grows ever more precarious.

Attributes: Agility d6, Smarts d12, Spirit d8, Strength d6, Vigor d8

Skills: Boating d6, Driving d6, Fighting d6, Guts d8, Intimidation d6, Investigation d8, Knowledge (Biology, Chemistry, Occult, Physics) d12, Notice d8, Piloting d6, Repair d12, Shooting d6, Streetwise d8, Taunt d8, Throwing d6, Weird Science d12

Charisma: -3; **Grit:** 5; **Pace:** 6; **Parry:** 5; **Toughness:** 6

Hindrances: Curious, Greedy, Mean, Vow (Create Own Legacy)

Dementias: AbsentMinded, Eccentricity, Paranoia

Edges: Arcane Background (Weird Science), Charismatic, Filthy Rich, Gadgeteer, Luck, Level Headed, McGyver, Mr. Fix It, New Powers, Power Points, Scholar (Biology, Physics), Strong Willed

Powers: *Armor* (Amazing Augmented Man), *blast* (Electric Cannon), *speed*

(Fully Autonomous Walker), *windstorm* (Wondrous Weathersphere); **Power Points:** 30

Gear: Tool kit, monocle.



Emmett "Black Heart" Hartley

Hartley's been around Devil's Backbone for a bit, but even though he's approaching his late 30s, he's still a mean hombre. Indirect exposure to the ghost rock has weakened him a bit, but he's still formidable with a pistol. He keeps his bandits in line with a scowl, and every so often a bullet.

Attributes: Agility d8, Smarts d10, Spirit d10, Strength d8, Vigor d10

Skills: Fighting d8, Guts d10, Knowledge (Battle) d12, Knowledge (Devil's Backbone) d6, Notice d10, Persuasion d6, Riding d8, Shooting d10

Charisma: 0; **Grit:** 5; **Pace:** 6; **Parry:** 6; **Toughness:** 7

Hindrances: Bloodthirsty, Cautious, Enemy (Minor, Hubert Lavigne), Greedy, Mean, Wanted (Major)

Edges: Combat Reflexes, Fervor, Hard to Kill, Dodge, Hip-Shooting, Marksman, Reputation (Bad), Steady Hands, Speed Load, Quick Draw

Gear: Colt Frontier (Range: 12/24/48, Damage: 2d6, RoF 1, Shots 6, AP 1), knife (Damage: Str+d4).



Ezra "Eagle Eye" Fessler

Ezra hasn't been tainted by his sister-in-law's service to the Reckoners, but that's mostly because he was mean enough before she met him. It's only a matter of time before he's a damned participant rather than just an ambivalent one. He's come about most of his skills the hard way, through hard work, experience, and pushing beyond his limits.

Attributes: Agility d10, Smarts d8, Spirit d10, Strength d6, Vigor d8

Skills: Fighting d8, Gambling d8, Guts d10, Intimidation d12, Knowledge (Law) d6, Notice

d8, Persuasion d10, Riding d10, Shooting d12, Stealth d10, Survival d8, Tracking d8

Charisma: 0; **Grit:** 5; **Pace:** 6; **Parry:** 6; **Toughness:** 6

Hindrances: Arrogant, Mean, Overconfident, Vengeful (Minor)

Edges: Command, Duelist, Improved Dodge, Improved Hip Shooting, Improved Trademark Weapon (Colt Navy Revolvers), Hard to Kill, Improved Level Headed, Luck, Quick Draw, Speed Load, Strong Willed

Gear: Two modified Colt Navy revolvers (Range: 12/24/48, Damage: 2d6+1, RoF 1, Shots 6, AP 1), Bowie knife (Damage: Str+d4, AP 1).



Jory Helgramme

The Danish Jory's bulky, imposingly tall figure with close cropped blond hair makes him look like he was once a soldier. Even though it's a weakness, his limping gait adds to his menacing presence as he lurches forward, leaning heavily on a cane. His face is pocked with small scars and blemishes, and he's even missing part of his left ear.

Helgramme was a rather famous monster hunter at one time. But he ran afoul of some pretty unsavory—and *unnatural*—customers during a mission to the catacombs under Istanbul. Now Helgramme looks irreparably broken, a pale imitation of his former self.

Attributes: Agility d8, Smarts d6, Spirit d6, Strength d6, Vigor d8

Skills: Fighting d10, Guts d6, Intimidation d8, Knowledge (Occult) d10, Notice d6, Shooting d10, Streetwise d6, Survival d6, Tracking d8

Charisma: 0; **Grit:** 2; **Pace:** 4; **Parry:** 7; **Toughness:** 6

Hindrances: Lame, Overconfident, Vow (Destroy or contain the supernatural)

Edges: Hard to Kill, True Grit

Gear: Twin double-action Peacemakers (Range: 12/24/48, Damage: 2d6+1, RoF 1, Shots 6, AP 1), Bowie knife (Damage: Str+d4+1, AP 1), walking stick.



Leonard Cave

The rebuilt Leonard Cave is much hardier than he was in life, although that comes with the loss of his soul, personality, and most of his memory. The manitou terrorizes the folks who once who adored the local hero, and whatever vestige of Cave remains crudely rationalizes that he's only protecting himself from those who killed him.

Attributes: Agility d4, Smarts d6, Spirit d6, Strength d12+2, Vigor d12

Skills: Fighting d10, Stealth d12 (+2 inside the tubes only)

Parry: 8, **Pace:** 6, **Toughness:** 10

Special Abilities:

- **Fear (-1):** Cave is an abomination, and meeting him provokes a Guts roll (-1).
- **Fearless:** Cave's new form isn't quite capable of comprehending Fear, and cannot be Intimidated.
- **Hardy:** A second Shaken result does not cause a wound on Cave.
- **Iron Hands:** Str+d6. Cave strikes once with each iron hand each round, with no penalty.
- **Undead:** +2 Toughness; +2 to recover from being Shaken; called shots do no extra damage (except to his power source—see below).
- **Weakness (Power Source):** Without his power source in place and filled with ghost rock, Cave deactivates. It's a called shot at -6 to target the power source, but dealing Cave a wound in this fashion shuts him down permanently. Any Mad Scientist can make a Smarts roll to determine the function of the canister and eject it. Good luck getting Cave to hold still long enough to do it, though!



Pirate Buckley

Pirate Buckley has been keeping tabs on “his” town ever since he dragged himself back out of the ground. Too mean to be killed, he’s been biding his time to raze the entire city of Culverton. He’s not expecting his cover to be blown, so any discovery by his kin or a troublesome posse catch him a bit flat-footed. Needless to say he’s a little rankled at any such discovery.

Attributes: Agility d8, Smarts d6, Spirit d6, Strength d6, Vigor d8

Skills: Boating d12+2, Fighting d10, Gambling d8, Knowledge (Occult) d6, Riding d6, Shooting d8, Stealth d8, Survival d8, Swimming d8

Charisma: -4; **Grit:** 5; **Pace:** 6; **Parry:** 5; **Toughness:** 7

Hindrances: Bloodthirsty, Greedy, Mean

Edges: Arcane Background (Black Magic), Combat Reflexes, Danger Sense, Dead Shot, Expert (Boating), Implacable, New Power, Power Points, Reputation (Bad), Stitchin’, Tough As Nails

Powers: *Bolt, deflection, fear, whirlwind;*
Power Points: 20.

Gear: Double barrel shotgun (Range: 12/24/48, Damage: 1-3d6, RoF 1-2, Shots 2, Shooting +2), knife (Damage: Str+d4).

Special Abilities:

- **Harrowed:** Grit +1, needs 1d6 hours of sleep per night, only a head-shot can kill, “death” only puts Buckley down for 1d6 days.



Susie “Meadowlark” Fessler

As a servant of the dark powers she venerates, Susie Fessler has spent a good deal of her time performing terrifying rituals to garner the attention of evil spirits—manitous. She’s done a darn good job, drawing a whole swarm of them to Wagonsend in no time flat, and in turn drawing numerous other abominations to the area. With Thornton and Ezra at her side, she’s a mean one to beat.

Attributes: Agility d8, Smarts d10, Spirit d12+2, Strength d8, Vigor d10

Skills: Fighting d12, Guts d12, Healing d10, Intimidation d12, Knowledge (Occult) d12, Notice d12, Persuasion d12, Riding d12, Spellcasting d12+2, Stealth d12, Survival d12, Swimming d10, Taunt d10, Throwing d12, Tracking d12

Charisma: +2; **Grit:** 8; **Pace:** 6; **Parry:** 8; **Toughness:** 7

Hindrances: Bloodthirsty, Mean, Overconfident, Stubborn, Vengeful (Major), Vow (Major, serve the dark powers)

Edges: Arcane Background (Black Magic), Charismatic, Command, Expert (Spellcasting), Fast Healer, Fervor, Followers (Circus Folk), Harder to Kill, Improved Dodge, Improved Nerves of Steel, Improved Tough as Nails, Inspire, Quick, Strong Willed, Very Attractive

Special Abilities:

- **Reversal of Fortune:** Susie has learned about suspense and the art of showmanship, channeling dark power to accentuate her art. Even the most dangerous situations appear to be going against her before she escapes unharmed. Once per cowpoke per day, she can spend a Fate Chip to force an attacker to reroll the attack and keep the lower of the two results.
- **Weakness (Sioux Weapons):** Because she betrayed and murdered her tribe, Susie is especially vulnerable to their weaponry. Sioux weapons, or weapons that have been wielded by a Sioux, inflict +4 damage against Susie.



Thornton Fessler

Thornton Fessler is a master of misdirection and guile. His budding service to the Reckoners alongside his wife has granted him a few peculiar abilities that most people assume are just part of his act. Little do they know...

Attributes: Agility d10, Smarts d10, Spirit d8, Strength d8, Vigor d12

Skills: Fighting d10, Guts d10, Intimidation d12, Knowledge (Occult) d8, Notice d12, Persuasion d12, Riding d6, Stealth d8, Survival d12, Swimming d8, Taunt d12, Throwing d12

Charisma: 0; **Grit:** 5; **Pace:** 6; **Parry:** 7; **Toughness:** 8

Hindrances: Bloodthirsty, Overconfident, Vow (Major, serve the dark powers)

Edges: Fast Healer, Fervor, Harder to Kill, Improved Arcane Resistance, Improved Dodge, Improved First Strike, Improved Sweep, Improved Tough as Nails, Nerves of Steel, Quick, Strong Willed, Trademark Weapon (Swallowing Swords), Two-Fisted

Gear: “Swallowing Swords” x2 (sabers, Damage: Str+d6), whip (Parry -1, Reach +2, If the wielder scores a raise on his attack roll the attack does not inflict an additional d6 damage. Instead the victim suffers -2 to his Parry until his next action).

Special Abilities:

- **Regurgitate:** Thornton can summon up anything he’s Swallowed (see below) on command, expelling it in a Cone Template. This allows him a few unsavory tactics:
- **The Flaming Whip:** After using Regurgitate to spew oil, Thornton makes an Improved Sweep attack at +2. Defenders who score higher than Thornton move out of the way, while others take 1d10 damage and roll to see if they catch fire.
- **Prairie Tick Trick:** Thornton used his Swallow ability on a pair of prairie ticks, surprising them when they found themselves unable to eat

their way out. He can expel them at a target, which undoubtedly looks delicious to the ticks. See *Prairie Tick* in the *Deadlands Marshal’s Handbook*.

- **Swallow:** Anything that Thornton can put in his mouth, he can store for later. Although he can “swallow” a sword, he can’t get the hilt in, so he can’t store weapons that size or larger. He can store flammable oil, nasty critters, and the like indefinitely, though.



Wei Lei

The devious, waiflike, deadly Wei Lei is well along the road to becoming one of Warlord Kang’s most prized assassins. Although she’s not yet a true rival for Red Petals Su, in truth she’s a craftier opponent. Infiltrating and revealing the location of Rulamer will go a long way toward gaining Kang’s favor.

Attributes: Agility d8, Smarts d6, Spirit d8, Strength d8, Vigor d8

Skills: Fighting d10, Guts d8, Healing d8, Intimidation d6, Knowledge (English) d10, Notice d6, Persuasion d10, Shooting d6, Tracking d8

Charisma: 0; **Grit:** 5; **Pace:** 6; **Parry:** 9; **Toughness:** 6

Hindrances: Bloodthirsty, Mean, Stubborn, Vengeful (Major)

Edges: Arcane Background (Chi Mastery), Celestial Kung Fu (Shaolin), Combat Reflexes, Command, Connections (Kang’s Triad), Counterpunch, Improved Dodge, First Strike, Improved Block, Improved Martial Arts, New Powers, Sweep

Powers: *Armor* d6, *deflection* d8, *quickness* d8, *smite* d8; **Power Points:** 20

Gear: Wedding dress, bouquet.

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