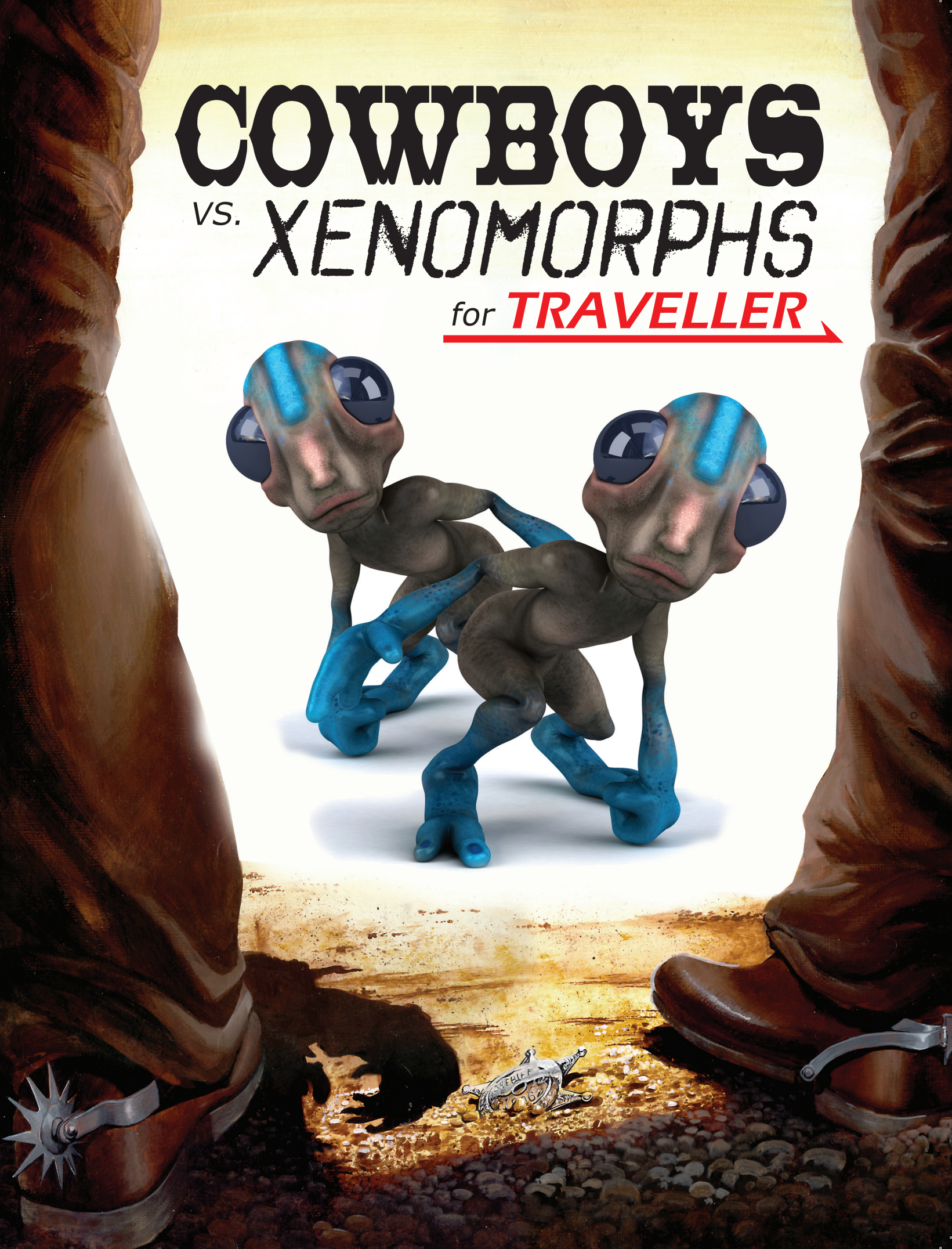
COWBOYS vs. XENOMORPHS for TRAVELLER



TRAVELLER

COWBOYS VS. XENOMORPHS

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Introduction

This is an adventure for Traveller, but one with a difference. Instead of playing in the far future, the players will be thrown into the Wild West. The action takes place in and around the frontier town of Bent River, though the players will discover heavy shades of science fiction soon make themselves felt.

Referees should take pains at *not* telling the players the title of this adventure, as the presence of aliens in the Wild West should be sprung upon them. Instead, tell them it is called something like The Last Ride of McCreedy, or The Rise of the Sioux, or anything that does not have the words xenomorph or alien in it! The adventure starts off like a normal Wild West tale, but things can get weird very quickly!

Cowboys vs. Xenomorphs is divided into six parts.

The Wild West

This covers all the rules changes and new equipment needed to integrate Traveller into a Wild West setting. Everything needed for the adventure can be found here, along with more information referees might like to use to create their own Wild West tales or extend this adventure into a campaign.

The Town of Bent River

A complete frontier town and its surrounding areas is detailed in this chapter, along with the various personalities and hazards that may be found there.

General Events

Cowboys vs. Xenomorphs starts off as a 'sandbox' type adventure, with players arriving at Bent River to find work, talk to the inhabitants and generally get into trouble. There is enough information in the previous chapter for a good referee to wing a lot of this but, if you are like the author, you might appreciate some help here.

This chapter introduces a variety of situations that will allow the players to get to know Bent River and the nearby wilderness, and ensure they have a stake in the town when the real trouble arises.

Cowboys vs. Xenomorphs

This is the core of the adventure. When the referee deems the players have played through enough of the General Events chapter, he can start to introduce the events from this one. The town of Bent River is the site of an alien invasion, and the players are the only ones who are in a position to make a difference and save the honest, hardworking people who live there.

Xenomorphology

Here we provide not just one type of alien but several for the referee to choose from. Each will subtly alter the aims and tactics of the aliens, and effect the overall outcome of the adventure (not to mention the adversaries the players will face). Whether you want a subtle alien influence gradually spreading through Bent River or balls-to-the-wall action, there will be an alien race in this chapter for you!

The Main Cast

To throw your players straight into the adventure, six pre-generated characters are provided here who should be suitable for most of the misfits that make up gaming groups (or is that just my regular games?).

The Wild West

Most of the rules in Traveller are be used in *Cowboys vs. Xenomorphs* without change, as there is a great deal that simply will not turn up in a Wild West setting. For example, you will not find a native character with the Battle Dress or Astrogation skills (though when alien characters are introduced, you will find all the normal Traveller rules integrate quite well into the changes and additions provided here).

This adventure assumes that the pre-generated characters will be used, but we have also provided a Desperado career (see p47) that players can use to create their own, unique characters. Referees are also welcome to convert some of the existing Traveller careers into Wild West versions, though you will find you will have to change or swap quite a few skills!

Ultimately, a referee must make his own decisions on what should and should not be allowed by players into the 19th Century American frontier.

Gun Duels

It is perfectly possible to get through this adventure without the players challenging or being challenged to a gun duel by anyone in Bent River. However, players being who they are, it is perhaps inevitable that, at some point, a gun duel will take place. In such an instance, you can use the following rules and guidelines.

In the traditional gunfighters-standing-in-the-street duel, simply use the Initiative system as it stands, along with the rules for Hastening, Dodging, etc. In the first round of a duel only, characters may add their Gun Combat (slug pistols) skill to their Initiative score, as well as their Dex DM. Note that some pistols were specifically designed to be quick drawn and grant a bonus to this as well, as noted in their descriptions later on. Again, this bonus is only added in the first round of a duel.

If, for any reason, a participant in a duel already has a weapon drawn (which does not exactly make it a traditional duel, but we understand how some players are), they gain a +2 DM to the first round's Initiative.

Characters may choose to spend a minor action Aiming before shooting in the first round (and there was some weight to the argument that it was better to take your time for a good shot in a duel, rather than simply blaze away). If they choose to do so, they suffer a –1 DM to their first round Initiative.

Typically, such duels are fought at Medium range.

After the first round, combat proceeds as normal. Wise players will come to understand that simply standing in the middle of the street is not a good approach to fighting a duel, and so if anyone is still on their feet after the first round, duels usually break down into running gunfights with participants diving for the nearest cover. Simply standing there, shooting, may look impressive but it is not regarded as 'honourable' and is, in fact, quite dumb.

Equipment

Cowboys vs. Xenomorphs ostensibly takes place in a Tech Level 3 setting, with some Tech Level 4 elements beginning to be introduced. When converting Traveller equipment into the Wild West, assume 1 Credit is equal to 1 Dollar (this is not historically accurate in many cases, but simplicity is your friend!).

For ease of reference, common weapons and items of equipment are listed below.

Bags and Boxes

Sack: A standard burlap sack, once used to hold flour, vegetables or some other goods.
Saddlebag: A leather bag designed to attach to a saddle.
Chest: This is a travel chest, one a family of settlers might store their treasured possessions in. Such trunks are often quite well made and ornate. A chest is fitted with a lock that requires a Very Difficult (-4) Mechanics check to open and will sustain 25 points of damage.
Strongbox: This strongbox is bound in iron. It is the sort of container that might be carried on a stagecoach, holding important mail, monies, gold and other valuable items. The strongbox has a lock that requires a Formidable (-6) Mechanics check to open and will sustain 50 points of damage.
Barrel: Barrels are still one of the most common ways to store items. Anything that must keep for a long time tends to be stored in barrels.

Clothing

Business suit: A dark suit, suitable for an undertaker, clerk, banker or lawyer.
Casual wear: Most men in the Wild West wear sensible clothing consisting of a cotton shirt, breeches or trousers, an overcoat in wet weather, boots and a hat. Women tend to wear heavier dresses and shawls.
Formal dress: This outfit is suitable for a formal dinner, dance or funeral.
Uniform: An army uniform.

Outerwear

Coat: This heavy leather or buffalo-hide duster protects the wearer from cold, precipitation and dust. It is also heavy enough to provide one point of armour.
Hat: This can be the classic ten-gallon hat of the cowboy, or a more reasonable derby or sombrero. A hat keeps the sun and the flies off, holds water, works as a fan, and is also usable as a flag or signalling device.

Leather chaps: These coverings protect the cowboy's legs during long rides, as well as from thorny underbrush and harsh weather.
Boots: A finely made pair of good boots can cost up to thirty dollars, but such fancy footwear is normally the mark of the dude or dandy.
Spurs: A pair of spurs that attaches to any boot heels. Spurs give a +1 DM to Animals (riding) checks, or a +2 DM if the rider is willing to inflict one point of damage on his mount.
Bandanna: This little square of cloth is one of the most useful items to have on the range. It can be used to shade the back of the neck from the sun, as a dust mask, a towel, a strainer for muddy water, a hat tie in windy weather, a sling or bandage, a face shroud for the dead or a noose for the guilty. Bandannas are also notoriously used to conceal one's identity when embarking on hold-ups and robberies, simply by tying the scarf around the lower part of the face and pulling a hat down low over the eyes. When used in this way, a bandanna will provide a +1 DM to a Deception check to conceal a character's identity.

Professional Equipment

Doctor's Bag: The bag contains bandages, scalpels, tourniquets and other tools, as well as a selection of balms, anaesthetics and other drugs. It allows the full use of the Medic skill, including surgery.
Forgery kit: This is a set of papers, pens and inks, as well as a magnifying glass, knives and glue. It can be used to forge documents and letters.
Handcuffs: These sturdy steel manacles have a lock that requires a Difficult Mechanics check to open, and can sustain 10 points of damage. These handcuffs can be for the hands or feet (known as leg irons) – the latter costs $35.
Lockpick set: This set of probes, skeleton keys and picks allows a character to use the Mechanics skill to open locks without penalty.
Mechanical tool kit: A box of wrenches, hammers, saws and other tools.

Trail Gear

Spyglass: A small, collapsible telescope that has a range of 15 miles or so on a clear day. It provides a +1 DM to any Recon check to notice a distant object, providing the user takes a full round to use it.
Rope: Good sturdy honest rope that can be used as a lariat, to tie up a steer, or to corral a horse, not to mention climb down a cliff or hang a rustler.
Compass: It points north. A compass on its own will not get a traveller anywhere – a man needs to know the trails and routes through the wilderness to avoid dangers.
Oil lamp: At night, the lamp casts bright illumination within 10 metres and spills burning oil if broken or thrown.
Tent: This little tent provides little protection from the elements, but does shelter the character from light wind and rain.
Canteen: A canteen holds three days worth of water.
Bedroll: Travellers sleeping under the stars need a bedroll for a comfortable night.
Blanket: Travellers sleeping under the stars need a blanket for a comfortable night in cold weather.
Trap: Traps come in various sizes, for catching anything from squirrels to bears (and, occasionally, people). Some traps are damaging; others merely entangle the victim. A trap for squirrel-sized creatures inflicts 1 point of damage when triggered; one for coyotes deals 1d6 damage, man-sized creatures 1d6+2, and larger creatures trap 2d6.
Branding Iron: Heated in a bonfire, this tool is used to mark cattle with the signature brand of a particular ranch or trail herd.
Saddle: A cowboy's saddle was among his most prized (and expensive) possessions.
Saddle, Enhanced: Gives a +1 DM to Animals (riding) checks.
Shovel: A useful tool designed for digging holes and shifting earth. Can also act as an improvised club in an emergency.
Saw: Usually used for cutting branches or working wood, although it is not unheard of for a humble saw to act as an improvised amputation tool when there is nothing more suitable available.
Pick: A combination of axe and hammer, used for anything from breaking rocks to digging tunnels. A vital component of any mining exhibition, a pick can also be used as an improvised axe if necessary.

Weapon Accessories

Holster: This holster can be attached to a belt and holds a single pistol. A masterwork holster (costing $50) gives a +1 DM to initiative when quick-drawing a weapon at the start of a fight. It also protects the weapon from exposure to the elements.
Pistol Belt: This belt holds twenty bullets, which are easily accessible in a fire-fight. Having one allows a gun to be reloaded as a significant action in a firefight.
Rifle Cover: This oilcloth or leather cover protects a longarm from exposure.
Ammo Bandolier: An ammo bandolier is usually worn over one shoulder and holds twenty bullets, giving the same benefits as a pistol belt, although it can also carry rifle bullets and shotgun cartridges.
Telescopic Sight: Effectively a small telescope that allows a character to aim any rifle with pinpoint accuracy. A character using a rifle fitted with telescopic sights reduces the range to a target by one range band while aiming.
Gun Cleaning Kit: A gun can quickly become jammed with dirt and other foreign particles. This kit contains cloths, oils and tools to keep a weapon clean.

Consumables

Trail Rations (one week): Trail rations consist of dried meat, pemmican, beans and other preserved food. Most supplement this measly diet with hunting, fresh food traded for along the way, or the contents of a chuckwagon. Still, those heading into uninhabited territory should take along a few weeks worth of food.
Lamp Oil: This is a large jug of oil, containing one pint of lamp oil.
Tobacco: For smoking or chewing.

General Equipment

Object	Mass (kg)	Cost ($)
Bags and Boxes		
Sack	-	1
Saddlebag	4	40
Chest	12	15
Strongbox	16	125
Barrel	15	5
Clothing		
Business Suit	1	60
Casual Wear	1	25
Formal Dress	2	75
Uniform	1	50
Outerwear		
Coat	2	50
Hat	-	15
Leather Chaps	-	20
Boots	-	25
Spurs	-	5
Bandana	-	1
Professional Equipment		
Doctor's Bag	7	125
Forgery Kit	3	75
Handcuffs	0.5	25
Lockpick Set	0.5	10
Mechanical Tool Kit	15	50
Trail Gear		
Spyglass	1.5	75
Rope (50 ft.)	6	20
Compass	-	10
Oil lamp	2	5
Tent	15	30
Canteen	0.5	2
Bedroll	5	20
Blanket	1.5	2
Trap	3	5
Branding Iron	1.5	10
Saddle	10	125
Saddle, Enhanced	10	250
Shovel	3	10
Saw	1	5
Pick	2	20
Weapon Accessories		
Holster	-	10
Pistol Belt	-	5
Ammo Bandolier	-	5
Gun Cleaning Kit	0.5	10
Telescopic Sight	-	25
Consumables		
Trail Rations (one week)	5	5
Lamp Oil	4	1
Tobacco	-	1
Luxuries		
Banjo	3	60
Deck of Cards	-	1
Harmonica	-	2
Newspaper	-	1
Piano	300	500
Violin	0.5	50

Luxuries

Banjo: A relatively easy instrument to play.
Deck of Cards: Used for gambling.
Newspaper: Newspapers were common in the West – many small towns had their own newspaper, printed locally. The printer was often the writer, editor and publisher as well; vendettas and petty feuds often raged across the columns of newsprint.
Piano: This is an upright piano. It could be a status symbol to a settler, or play jaunty music in a drinking hall of debauchery and gambling.
Violin: Perhaps the most popular instrument in the West, many found themselves making more money playing the fiddle than they did through mining or ranching.

Wagons

A character inside a wagon has ¾ cover when inside, or ½ cover when firing out the front or back, unless otherwise stated. As the bed of the wagon slopes upwards, a character lying in the wagon has full cover.

Circled Wagons

The most common defence of a wagon train is to arrange the wagons into a circle, forming a corral in the middle to hold the horses or oxen and providing a defensive line to hold out against attackers. Characters can use the wagons for cover and anyone trying to run between the wagons or crawl under them will be unable to dodge or parry, making them vulnerable.

Light Wagon (Buckboard): This is a small cart with springy suspension under the front seat. It is pulled by two horses. Another four or five people can be crammed into the back, although it will be an uncomfortable ride for them. The wagon has only a light rail to keep the cargo in, which provides ¼ cover.
Chuckwagon: The chuckwagon accompanies a cattle drive, and contains the cook's equipment and food stores, along with other supplies such as bedrolls, blankets and rain slickers. A water barrel sits at the front of the wagon and a folding table is at the rear. Underneath is a cowhide sling that holds fuel for the campfires and the wagon's oven. Early in a drive, the fuel might be dry wood; later, buffalo chips are used. Tools such as hammers and axes are stored in a box underneath the driver's seat.
Conestoga Wagon: This is the classic covered wagon of the settler, carrying a whole family's possessions as they make for a new life out West. Tools such as the wagon jack for lifting the wagon and changing the wheel are tied to the sides of the wagon or stored in the back.
Schooner Wagon: Smaller and lighter than the older Conestoga, schooners appear during the 1840s. Like the Conestoga, they are covered in canvas. Schooners required fewer animals to pull them, and their lighter frames were more suited for crossing rivers and other difficult terrain.
Stagecoach: Stagecoach services started in the 1850s, carrying passengers, mail and goods across the wide plains at great speed. Most of the passengers sat inside on cushioned seats,

Vehicle	Crew	Passengers	Horses	Cargo (kg)	Agility	Speed	Armour	Hull	Structure	Cost ($)
Light Wagon	1	1	2	325	-1	30 kph	2	-	1	375
Chuckwagon	1	1	4	400	-2	25 kph	2	-	1	1,250
Conestoga Wagon	1	1	6	800	-2	25 kph	2	-	1	2,500
Schooner	1	1	4	500	-1	30 kph	2	-	1	3,500
Stagecoach	2	15	8	750	+0	40 kph	3	1	1	3,750
Buggy	1	1	2	190	+0	40 kph	1	-	1	250

although a removable leather bench could be added between the two rows of seats. Another three passengers could sit atop the roof seat, behind the driver's box seat. Beneath the driver's seat is a compartment containing the strongbox, tools, clothes and water. Most of the cargo was held in the back; excess packages were strapped to the roof. A character inside a stagecoach has ¾ cover; a character atop the stage has only ¼ cover. A team of four horses can pull a stagecoach, though it must halve either its speed or passengers and cargo capacity if they do.

Buggy: This is a small horse-drawn vehicle, the sort that an honest settler might drive to church on a Sunday. A buggy provides no cover.

Lifestyle

Lifestyle items include travel expenses, entertainment and meals beyond the ordinary, and housing. Lifestyle items are shown on the table below.

Housing	Cost ($)
Poor Hotel	1
Average	3
Good	10
Excellent	30
Entertainment	**Cost**
Bordello	150+
Dance Hall	2
Musical	2
Stage Play	5
Whiskey Shot	1
'Long bit' (Shot & Beer chaser)	2
Transportation	**Cost**
Stagecoach	1/mile
Stagecoach, St. Louis to San Francisco	1,000
Train, cross-country	400
Ship, New York to Liverpool	200

Weapons

Ranged weapons fall into four general groups; pistols, longarms, shotguns and 'other,' such as bows or spears. Unless otherwise stated, all weapons require a full round to reload their ammunition.

Pistols

Adams 'Improved': Changes to the locking bolt makes this weapon more resistant to wear and tear.

Adams 'Service': This gun became popular during the Crimean war, and was adopted as the British service revolver.

Adams 'Single Action': A simplified version of the Improved model.

Colt 'Army': The standard army revolver in the latter part of the 19th century.

Colt 'Buntline Special': This has a 12-inch long barrel, giving it a –1 DM to Initiative when quick drawn at the start of a gun duel.

Colt 'Cavalry': The standard sidearm of the cavalry.

Colt 'Lightning': A fast and light gun, popular with couriers.

Colt 'Navy': This design was popular among Confederate officers.

Colt 'Peacemaker': One of the most famous and popular guns of the west, the massive Peacemaker had a huge recoil, but was also rather lethal. Peacemakers killed Jesse James, Billy the Kid and Pat Garrett.

Colt 'Shopkeeper': A short-barrelled version of the standard Colt.

Colt 'Thunderer': One of the earlier double-action Colts.

Deane-Adams 'Pocket': A smaller version of the regular Deane-Adams.

Deane-Adams: Originally English-made, this reliable pistol was also constructed in Boston.

Le Faucheux: French-designed pistol.

Paterson Colt: One of the earliest revolvers, the Paterson Colt was rather delicate and finicky.

Remington 'Army': Reliable and efficient, the Remington Army was used by 'Buffalo' Bill Cody.

Pistols

Weapon	Range	Damage	Auto	Recoil	Mass (kg)	Magazine	Cost ($)	Ammo Cost ($)
Adams 'Improved'	Ranged (pistol)	3d6	No	0	1	5	110	5
Adams 'Service'	Ranged (pistol)	4d6-3	No	1	1	6	200	15
Adams 'Single Action'	Ranged (pistol)	3d6+3	No	0	1	6	130	5
Colt 'Army'	Ranged (pistol)	3d6	No	0	1	6	130	5
Colt 'Buntline Special'	Ranged (pistol)	3d6+3	No	0	1	6	175	5
Colt 'Cavalry'	Ranged (pistol)	3d6	No	0	1	6	110	5
Colt 'Lightning'	Ranged (pistol)	3d6-3	No	0	1	6	85	5
Colt 'Navy'	Ranged (pistol)	3d6-3	No	0	1	6	60	5
Colt 'Peacemaker'	Ranged (pistol)	3d6	No	1	1	6	100	5
Colt 'Shopkeeper'	Ranged (pistol)	3d6-3	No	0	1	6	60	5
Colt 'Thunderer'	Ranged (pistol)	3d6	No	0	1	6	100	5
Deane-Adams	Ranged (pistol)	3d6	No	0	1	5	90	5
Deane-Adams 'Pocket'	Ranged (pistol)	3d6-3	No	0	1	5	75	5
Le Faucheux	Ranged (pistol)	3d6	No	0	1	7	110	5
Paterson Colt	Ranged (pistol)	3d6-3	No	0	1	5	45	5
Remington 'Army'	Ranged (pistol)	3d6	No	0	1	6	75	5
Remington-Elliot	Ranged (pistol)	3d6-3	No	0	1	4	25	5
S&W 'American'	Ranged (pistol)	3d6	No	0	1	6	95	5
Savage 'Navy'	Ranged (pistol)	3d6-3	No	0	1	6	85	5
Schofield S&W 'Frontier'	Ranged (pistol)	3d6	No	0	1	6	135	5
Sharps Derringer	Ranged (pistol)	3d6-3	No	0	1	4	25	5
Slocum 'Pocket Arm'	Ranged (pistol)	3d6-3	No	0	1	5	60	5
Smith & Wesson no.2	Ranged (pistol)	3d6-3	No	0	1	6	65	5
Starr 'Army'	Ranged (pistol)	3d6	No	0	1	6	100	5
Tranter	Ranged (pistol)	4d6-3	No	1	1	5	150	15
Tranter 'Army'	Ranged (pistol)	4d6-3	No	1	1	5	160	15
Walch 'Navy'	Ranged (pistol)	3d6-3	No	0	1	12	60	5
Walker-Colt 'Dragoon'	Ranged (pistol)	4d6-3	No	2	1	6	150	15
Webley 'Army'	Ranged (pistol)	3d6+3	No	0	1	5	100	5
Webley 'Bulldog'	Ranged (pistol)	4d6-3	No	1	1	6	210	15

Remington-Elliot: This little derringer can be used like a knuckleduster, adding a +1 DM to damage from punch attacks.
S&W 'American': Used by both the American and Russian armies, this was a popular and powerful revolver.
Savage 'Navy': This curiously designed gun had its cocking lever positioned inside the trigger guard. A character unfamiliar with the gun might accidentally re-cock the gun instead of firing it.
Schofield S&W 'Frontier': A well made and comfortable weapon, especially good for those not used to firearms.
Sharps Derringer: This vicious little four-barrelled pepperbox is especially lethal at close range – if it hits an enemy within Close range it will cause an extra 1d6 damage.
Slocum 'Pocket Arm': Notable for its elegant design and front-loading chambers.
Smith & Wesson no.2: Despite its nickname of 'Old Army,' this gun was never issued to soldiers, but was purchased in large quantities by officers and enlisted men alike. It was also popular on the frontier.
Starr 'Army': Third behind Colt and Remington-made weapons in popularity during the Civil War.
Tranter 'Army': This English-made gun had a double trigger mechanism, letting it be fired in single or double-action mode.
Tranter: This is the regular, single-trigger form of the Tranter.
Walch 'Navy': This gun has double-sized chambers, allowing it to carry twice as many bullets. It requires two full rounds to reload.
Walker-Colt 'Dragoon': While not as unreliable as the earlier Walker model, the sheer power packed into the barrel of the Dragoon means that the gun tends to backfire badly.
Webley 'Army': While later Webleys were famously efficient, this earlier model is not especially noteworthy.
Webley 'Bulldog': A large-calibre British-made pistol.

Rifles

Burnside Carbine: The third most popular cavalry rifle of the era.
Colt 'Revolving' Rifle: Essentially a revolver with a rifle-length barrel and stock.
Dreyse 'Needle Gun': One of the earliest breech-loaders, the earlier needle-guns were underpowered and unreliable. This more modern design is more powerful but equally troublesome.
Hawken 'Plains Rifle': Popular with settlers and homesteaders on the Great Plains.
Henry Rifle: Technically ahead of its time, but not especially popular or common.
Indian Trade Musket: This simple weapon was manufactured by the various fur companies for trading to the Indian tribes. The musket was a rough-and-ready gun, lacking the fine lines or decorations of more expensive weapons, but it was long lasting.
'Mississippi' Rifle: The M1841 was the first percussion rifle commonly used in the United States, and was widely imitated by other manufacturers.
Remington 'Rolling Block': The Remington was extremely well balanced, giving a +1 DM to attack rolls. However, it lacked penetrating power.
Sharps 'Big 50': Built to satisfy the demand of buffalo hunters for a more powerful weapon, the Sharps 'Big 50' actually came on the market after most of the great herds were gone.
Sharps 'Buffalo Gun': Another heavy longarm, designed to bring down a buffalo with a single shot.
Sharps Carbine: A lighter and smaller variant of the reliable Sharps Rifle, suitable for use on horseback.
Sharps Rifle: Praised for the high quality of its construction, this was the first mass-produced weapon from the Sharps factory.
Spencer Carbine: Marginally more powerful than the Springfield carbine, the Spenser's rimfire cartridges had a tendency to misfire.
Springfield Carbine: This was one of the primary weapons of the U.S. Army during the western era, and was praised for its range and reliability.
'Squirrel' Rifle: A cheap hunting rifle, suitable for shooting small game.
Starr Carbine: This carbine was plagued with problems and was very vulnerable to jamming if mistreated.
'Trapdoor' Springfield Carbine: The 'trapdoor' design was originally a compromise conversion of older muzzle-loading muskets into something like a more modern breech-loading rifle. The Springfield carbine, however, was a production model that incorporated the trapdoor.
US Musket, mod.1842: A mass-produced military weapon, many of which found their way out West.
Volcanic 'Rocket-Ball' Carbine: Notoriously finicky and underpowered.
Winchester '1-in-1000': A prestige version of the popular Winchester rifle, this rifle gives a +1 DM to attack rolls.
Winchester '76': This is the commonly available version of the 1-in-1000, lacking the precision-made barrel that gives the other gun its superlative accuracy.
Winchester Rifle: The famous Winchester rifle was the single most popular rifle of the Wild West. Endorsed by many famous hunters including 'Buffalo' Bill himself, the weapon's combination of reliability, range and firepower made it a favourite.
Winchester 'Yellow Boy': One of the earliest repeater rifles, it earned its nickname thanks to its bright brass stock.

Shotgun

Colt 'Revolving' Shotgun: An attempt to combine the power of a shotgun with the speed of a revolver, the Colt Revolving shotgun was a single barrelled, 75-calibre weapon, valued for its speed but with an unfortunate tendency to jam.
Colt 'Stagecoach' Shotgun: The weapon of choice for stagecoach drivers and guards, the Colt Stagecoach was a very large, 12-gauge double-barrelled shotgun much prized for its reliability and intimidation value.

Rifles and Muskets

Weapon	Range	Damage	Auto	Recoil	Mass (kg)	Magazine	Cost ($)	Ammo Cost ($)
Burnside Carbine	Ranged (rifle)	3d6+3	No	1	5	1	65	1
Colt 'Revolving' Rifle	Ranged (rifle)	3d6-3	No	1	5	6	85	5
Dreyse 'Needle Gun'	Ranged (rifle)	3d6+3	No	1	6	1	75	1
Hawken 'Plains Rifle'	Ranged (rifle)	4d6	No	1	7	1	60	1
Henry Rifle	Ranged (rifle)	3d6-3	No	1	7	15	130	10
Indian Trade Musket	Ranged (assault weapon)	3d6+3	No	1	5	1	45	1
'Mississippi' Rifle	Ranged (rifle)	3d6+3	No	1	6	1	50	1
Remington 'Rolling Block'	Ranged (rifle)	3d6	No	1	6	1	85	1
Sharps 'Big 50'	Ranged (rifle)	4d6	No	1	7	1	180	1
Sharps 'Buffalo Gun'	Ranged (rifle)	4d6+3	No	2	8	1	275	1
Sharps Carbine	Ranged (rifle)	3d6	No	1	5	1	50	1
Sharps Rifle	Ranged (rifle)	3d6+3	No	1	6	1	65	1
Spencer Carbine	Ranged (rifle)	3d6+3	No	1	6	7	145	6
Springfield Carbine	Ranged (rifle)	3d6+3	No	1	6	1	50	1
'Squirrel' Rifle	Ranged (assault weapon)	3d6	No	1	5	1	45	1
Starr Carbine	Ranged (rifle)	3d6	No	1	5	1	55	1
'Trapdoor' Springfield Carbine	Ranged (rifle)	3d6+3	No	1	5	1	75	1
US Musket, mod.1842	Ranged (rifle)	4d6	No	1	7	1	75	1
Volcanic 'Rocket-Ball' Carbine	Ranged (assault weapon)	2d6	No	1	7	15	50	10
Winchester '1-in-1000'	Ranged (rifle)	3d6+3	No	1	7	15	375	10
Winchester '76'	Ranged (rifle)	3d6+3	No	1	7	15	200	10
Winchester Rifle	Ranged (rifle)	3d6	No	1	7	15	160	10
Winchester 'Yellow Boy'	Ranged (rifle)	3d6-3	No	1	7	12	140	10

Shotguns

Weapon	Range	Damage	Auto	Recoil	Mass (kg)	Magazine	Cost ($)	Ammo Cost ($)
Colt 'Revolving' Shotgun	Ranged (shotgun)	4d6	No	2	4	4	375	8
Colt 'Stagecoach' Shotgun	Ranged (shotgun)	4d6+3	No	2	5	1	200	2
Hartford Cowboy Shotgun	Ranged (shotgun)	4d6+3	No	2	5	1	225	2
Meteor double-barrelled 'Street Howitzer'	Ranged (pistol)	5d6	No	3	6	1	625	2
Spencer Slide Action Shotgun	Ranged (shotgun)	4d6	No	2	4	8	275	15
Springfield Trapdoor Shotgun	Ranged (shotgun)	4d6	No	2	4	4	180	8
Winchester Lever Action Shotgun	Ranged (shotgun)	4d6	No	2	4	6	175	12

Hartford Cowboy Shotgun: Bulky and intimidating, this 12-gauge double-barrelled shotgun has double cocking hammers and twin triggers, allowing both barrels to discharge simultaneously. Despite its name, the Hartford cowboy was more likely to be seen in the hands of a stagecoach driver or guard.
Meteor double-barrelled 'Street Howitzer': A stocky, hammerless double barrelled shotgun, the Street Howitzer is short in range but packs a powerful punch and therefore became the weapon of choice for fighting at close quarters. It is notorious as the weapon used by 'Doc' Holliday at the gunfight at the OK Corral.
Spencer Slide Action Shotgun: A short, single barrel shotgun, the Spencer Slide-Action had a revolutionary design that allowed it to carry far more ammunition than a standard shotgun. Cartridges were carried in a tube beneath the barrel, forced into the firing breech by a manually operated slider, allowing a much faster rate of fire than a standard breech-loading shotgun.
Springfield Trapdoor Shotgun: A single barrelled shotgun with a 'trapdoor' reloading method, rather than the more usual breech loading system.
Winchester Lever Action Shotgun: Essentially, the Winchester lever action shotgun is a shotgun that has been designed to resemble a standard Winchester rifle. Although only possessing a single barrel, this 12-gauge shotgun is capable of loading six cartridges, forced into the firing chamber by operating the lever mechanism, cutting down on re-loading times dramatically.

Other Ranged Weapons

Bow: The wooden bow is the favoured weapon of the native tribes. A Social Sciences (Indian tribes) check allows a character to identify which tribes' arrows were used in an attack.
Lasso: The target of a successful lasso attack is Grappled by the lasso wielder. If mounted on a horse, then the lasso wielder can use the horse's Str DM instead of his own. A lasso cannot inflict wounds.
Spear: Indians use their spears as lances, charging into combat on horseback or foot.
Throwing Hatchet: This is a small hatchet or tomahawk, which can be thrown in combat.
Throwing Knife: A small knife balanced for throwing.
Whip: Used to galvanise unruly cattle and captives.

Explosives

Weapon	Damage	Radius	Cost ($)
Dynamite	2d6	1d6 metres	200
Gunpowder Keg	3d6	2d6 metres	600
Burning Bottle of Booze	1d6	1d6 metres	2

Dynamite: One of the most common and straightforward explosives, dynamite is very stable under normal conditions. A stick of dynamite requires a fuse or detonator to set it off. It is possible to wire together several sticks of dynamite for even greater explosive effect. Doing so requires an Average (+0) Explosives check. If the character succeeds on the check, the damage or the burst radius of the explosion increases by 50% (the character's choice) every time the amount of dynamite is doubled.. To set off dynamite using a fuse, the fuse must first be lit, requiring a significant action (and a source of flame). The amount of time until the dynamite explodes depends on the length of the fuse - a fuse can be cut short enough for the dynamite to detonate in the same round (allowing it to be used much like a grenade), or long enough to take several minutes to detonate. Cutting the fuse to the appropriate length requires a significant action. Dynamite is sold in boxes of 12 sticks.
Gunpowder Keg: A keg of black power can be detonated in the same way as dynamite, and can be combined with other kegs or with dynamite. Each additional keg increases damage by +2d6 (maximum 9d6) and the burst radius by 1d6 metres (maximum 6d6 metres). Gunpowder must be placed in position; it cannot be thrown.
Bottle of Burning Booze: This is a simple incendiary grenade, made up of a burning rag and particularly strong whiskey. Being hit by it may be less damaging than drinking it.

Other Ranged Weapons

Weapon	Range	Skill	Damage	Recoil	Cost ($)	Mass (kg)
Bow	Ranged (assault weapon)	Athletics (sling)	2d6	1	75	1
Lasso	Short	Athletics (thrown)	-	-	40	2
Spear	Ranged (thrown)	Athletics (thrown)	2d6	1	15	2
Throwing Hatchet	Ranged (thrown)	Athletics (thrown)	1d6+2	1	35	1
Throwing Knife	Ranged (thrown)	Athletics (thrown)	1d6-1	0	20	-
Whip	Short	Melee (unarmed)	1d6-3	-	75	2

Melee Weapons

Weapon	Range	Damage	Heft	Mass (kg)	Cost ($)
Axe	Melee (blade)	3d6	1	2	80
Bowie Knife	Melee (blade)	2d6	-	1	50
Brass Knuckles	Melee (unarmed)	1d6+1	-	0.5	5
Club	Melee (bludgeon)	2d6	0	1	-
Hatchet	Melee (blade)	3d6	1	2	120
Sabre	Melee (blade)	2d6+4	1	2	100
Small Knife	Melee (blade)	1d6+2	-	0.5	10

Axe: A wood chopping axe.
Bowie Knife: The famous razor-sharp trail knife, found in the outfit of most travellers. Traditionally, it is made from the broken blade of a sword, although most are actually made specially.
Brass Knuckles: A strike from brass knuckles is considered an unarmed attack.
Club: A cosh or other simple club.
Hatchet: A heavy metal or stone-bladed Indian hatchet.
Sabre: A slashing sword, suitable for using from horseback or as a fencing weapon.
Small Knife: This is a standard kitchen or wood-whittling knife.

Armour

Armour was rarely worn in the West, but it can be a useful edge for a character.

Armour	Protection	Required Skill	Cost ($)	Mass (kg)
Heavy Coat	1	None	50	1

Heavy Coat: A leather duster or buffalo-hide robe is tough enough to marginally reduce damage from attacks.

Horses

The West ran on horses. The Cavalry was the premier military unit, communications were carried by pony express and horse-drawn stagecoach, and some states considered horse theft a greater crime than murder. The cost of a horse varies depending on its quality, size and age.

Horse Type	Cost ($)
Mule	200
Pony	250
Pony, Excellent	350
Horse, Light	300
Horse, Excellent Light	500
Horse, Heavy	400
Horse, Excellent Heavy	800

Excellent mounts gain a +2 bonus to their Str and End scores.

When presenting a horse to the players as a possible mount or beast of burden, roll on the following table to provide a suitable trait for the horse. A horse of excellent quality can re-roll the first result but must keep the second result, even if it seems worse!

D66	Feat
11	Biter
12	Charger
13	Cutting Out
14	Distinctive
15-16	Easy Ride
17-21	Fast
22-23	Headstrong
24-25	Heavy-Footed
26-31	High Jumper
32-33	Loyal
34-35	Kicker
36-41	Nervous
42-43	Normal
44-45	Ornery
46-51	Skittish
52-53	Smart
54-55	Stable
56-61	Steady
62	Slow
63	Sickly
64	Unbroken
65	Wild
66	Roll Again Twice

Biter: The animal has the habit of biting people. If anyone moves in front of the mount without making a successful Average Animals (riding or training) check, then the mount tries to bite them if possible.
Charger: This horse is capable of surprising bursts of speed. When charging into combat, both it and its rider gain a +1 DM to their first attack rolls.
Cutting Out: This mount is swift and agile, eminently suitable for herding work. The rider gets a +2 DM to his animals (riding) checks that are greater than Average difficulty.

Distinctive: This animal has a special marking or brand. Anyone who sees the animal will recognises it on an Average Intelligence check if they have seen it before.
Easy Ride: This mount is noticeable more gentle and easy-going than most animals, making it a good mount for ladies and tenderfoots. This horse gives a +2 DM to Animals (riding) checks.
Fast: The horse runs like the wind. It gains a +2 DM to all Athletics (co-ordination and endurance) rolls related to movement.
Headstrong: The mount often chooses its own path. If the rider fails any Animals (riding) check, then in the next round, the animal moves as it wishes. The rider may regain control by making an Average Animals (riding) check.
Heavy-Footed: The mount is noticeably slow to react. The animal inflicts a –1 DM to all initiative rolls when ridden.
High Jumper: The mount is capable of impressive jumps. The mount has a +2 DM to all Athletics (co-ordination) checks while jumping.
Loyal: This mount is especially loyal to its current owner. If anyone other than the mount's owner attempts to use the Animals skill on this mount, they suffer a –2 DM to checks.
Kicker: This mount is liable to kick people who move behind it. If anyone moves behind of the mount without making an Average Animals (riding or training) check, then the mount makes a kick attack on them if possible.

Donkey

Behaviour and Diet	Preferred Habitat	Movement Mode(s)	Strength	Dexterity	Endurance	Intelligence	Instinct	Pack
Grazer, Herbivore	Plains, Woods	Walker	14	7	14	1	8	9
Skills:	Athletics 0, Melee (natural weapons) 0, Recon 0, Survival 0							
Attacks:	Kick (1d6)		Armour:	0		Number Encountered:		1d6

Horse, Heavy

Behaviour and Diet	Preferred Habitat	Movement Mode(s)	Strength	Dexterity	Endurance	Intelligence	Instinct	Pack
Grazer, Herbivore	Plains, Woods	Walker	18	6	18	1	9	12
Skills:	Athletics 0, Melee (natural weapons) 0, Recon 0, Survival 0							
Attacks:	Kick (2d6)		Armour:	0		Number Encountered:		2d6

Horse, Light

Behaviour and Diet	Preferred Habitat	Movement Mode(s)	Strength	Dexterity	Endurance	Intelligence	Instinct	Pack
Grazer, Herbivore	Plains, Woods	Walker	16	7	16	1	9	12
Skills:	Athletics 0, Melee (natural weapons) 0, Recon 0, Survival 0							
Attacks:	Kick (1d6)		Armour:	0		Number Encountered:		3d6

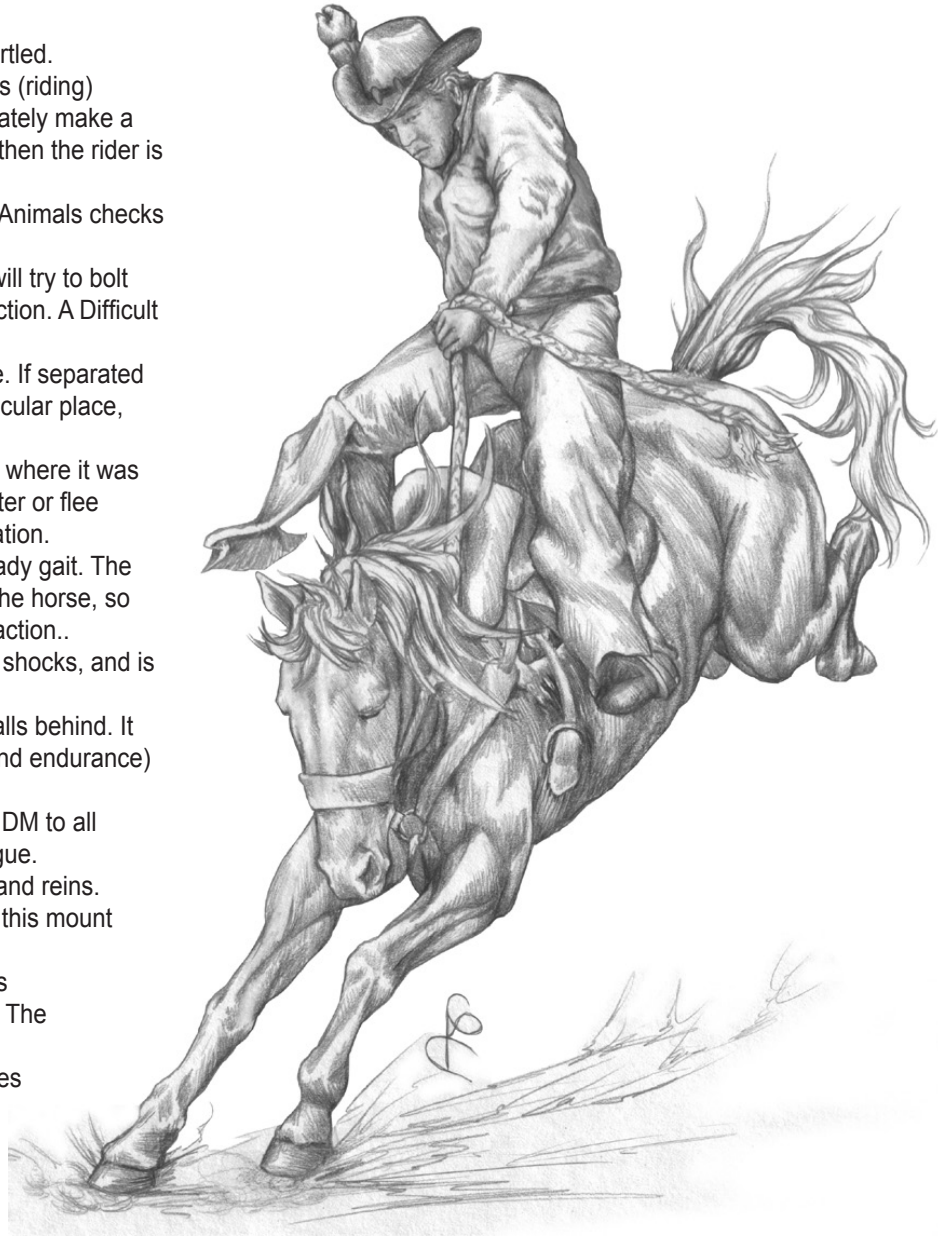
Mule

Behaviour and Diet	Preferred Habitat	Movement Mode(s)	Strength	Dexterity	Endurance	Intelligence	Instinct	Pack
Grazer, Herbivore	Plains, Woods	Walker	12	8	12	1	9	10
Skills:	Athletics 0, Melee (natural weapons) 0, Recon 0, Survival 0							
Attacks:	Kick (1d6)		Armour:	0		Number Encountered:		1d6

Pony

Behaviour and Diet	Preferred Habitat	Movement Mode(s)	Strength	Dexterity	Endurance	Intelligence	Instinct	Pack
Grazer, Herbivore	Plains, Woods	Walker	12	8	14	1	9	12
Skills:	Athletics 0, Melee (natural weapons) 0, Recon 0, Survival 0							
Attacks:	Kick (1d6)		Armour:	0		Number Encountered:		3d6

Nervous: This horse tends to rear up when startled. Whenever the rider rolls double 1 on an Animals (riding) check, the horse bucks. The rider must immediately make a Difficult (-2) Animals (riding) check. If this fails, then the rider is thrown and suffers 1d6 damage from the fall.
Ornery: This animal is mean and stubborn. All Animals checks involving this beast suffer a –2 DM.
Skittish: This mount is fearful and nervous. It will try to bolt when confronted by any loud noise or violent action. A Difficult (-2) Animals (riding) check will halt it.
Smart: This animal is smarter than the average. If separated from its owner, the animal will tend go to a particular place, such as a ranch or hiding place known to it.
Normal: An uncontrolled animal will either stay where it was left, wander off in search of good grass and water or flee strangers and predators depending on the situation.
Stable: This horse has a notable even and steady gait. The rider may aim with a weapon from the back of the horse, so long as he fulfils all other requirements for the action..
Steady: This mount is used to loud noises and shocks, and is unlikely to bolt or panic.
Slow: This horse is especially slow and soon falls behind. It suffers a –2 DM to all Athletics (co-ordination and endurance) rolls related to movement.
Sickly: This horse is ill. The horse suffers a –2 DM to all checks made to resist poison, disease and fatigue.
Unbroken: This animal is not used to saddles and reins. All Animals (ride and training) checks made for this mount suffer a –2 DM.
Wild: The animal mistrusts many people, and is unnerved by the approach of strangers on foot. The animal will react (neigh, attempt to flee, shuffle nervously) when it notices other creatures it does not recognise approaching.



The Town of Bent River

Read this text out aloud to start the adventure. The players are approaching Bent River for the first time…

You have travelled for three days under a blistering sun, and your water is almost gone. As the trail crests a hill, a marvellous site greets your eyes – civilisation! You ignore the pitiful number of buildings that make up what looks like a small mining town, for you can make out at least one saloon and the shining, clear water of a river snaking its way right through the place. As you enter the town, you pass a sign marked 'Bent River, population 157.'

The town of Bent River grew up due to the presence of gold found in nearby ravines and hills. Enough gold was found to make the first prospectors and miners quite wealthy but as more arrived, there was simply not enough to go round. Today, what few prospectors and miners remain are desperate and barely scratching a living.

Bent River is not exactly a one horse town, but spare mounts could probably be counted on one hand on any given day. We have not specified exactly where Bent River is, as the larger outside world does not feature much in this adventure, but the presence of the Lakota Indians suggests the western areas of South Dakota, maybe mid-to-late 19th Century.

Bent River was founded to service the needs of miners, so it has more drinking establishments and other entertainments than might otherwise be found in such a small settlement, as well as tool shops and assayers. Such mining towns can appear, flourish and vanish at breathtaking speed – when the claims are producing gold, then the towns are bustling, raucous places; but when the claims are worked out, the towns are soon abandoned. Bent River is currently going through the downward cycle, and one major sign of this is the departure of the town's only doctor (and part-time barber) a few months ago.

False-Front Buildings

These are fake structures that make a one-story board or log building look like an elaborate two-storey edifice. Most saloons and many other businesses had false fronts, to make them appear much more impressive and sophisticated. Bizarrely, this gave historical Western towns the appearance of a movie set…

As is common, Bent River is formed around a central street, though it is cut in two by a slow-flowing river, over which a simple but sturdy wooden bridge has been built. Towards the centre, more recent buildings have started to spread away from the main street but, as the locals say, you can still throw a stone from one end of Bent River to the other.

Bent River is, ultimately, a lonely place. The nearest settlement of any note is several days' ride away, there is no telegraph, and no regular postal service.

Locations of Bent River

The following is a description of the most important locations and buildings within Bent Water, and the people associated with them. Refer to the map on p15 for the location of each.

1. Blake's General Store

This general store provides everything the people of Bent River might need, from basic food supplies to clothes and ammunition. It also serves as a meeting place, occasional post office and stage station, and sometimes the de facto town hall. In many ways, the general store is the most important building in Bent River. Blake's General Store has most of the items listed under General Equipment on p3 most of the time, but more exotic or popular items can easily double or triple in price – if the players start buying the same items over and again, start raising the prices. Blake keeps a small store of pistols, rifles and shotguns but more unusual models will have to be ordered in, which will take 1-6 months.

The store is run by Blake Stern, a middle-aged man who wisely saw better profits in supporting miners than actual mining. He has seen his income drop in recent months as the town shrinks, and is really just looking for an excuse to sell or close his store down, and move on to better pickings.

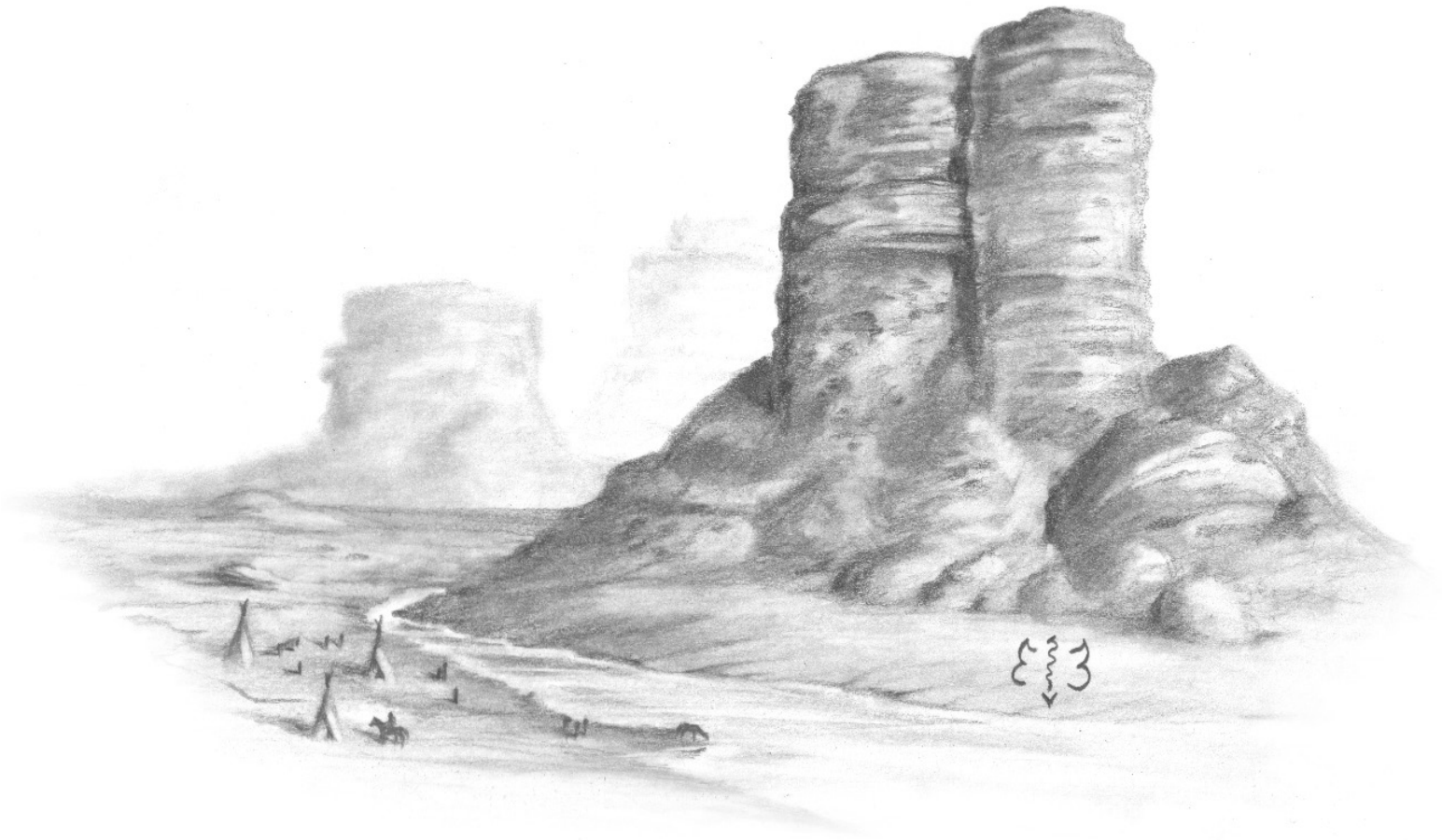
2. Mayor's Residence

There hasn't been a mayor in Bent River in months, not since Fat Joe Robson fled town after an argument with James Ward (see the Regency Saloon on p20). The only person living in the house now is Fat Joe's servant, a former slave named George Appletree. Fat Joe accidentally left a sum of money in the house and, as far as George is concerned, that money is his wages for a year. He's kept the house in perfect condition in case Joe ever comes back.

The Town of Bent River

Key

1. Blake's General Store
2. Mayor's Residence
3. Sheriff's Office & Town Jail
4. Bent River Saloon
5. St. John's Church
6. Wing Shu Laundry
7. Smamson's Horses
8. Bent River Bank
9. Riverboat's Rest Saloon
10. Gallows
11. Slim's Corral
12. Bent River Farriers
13. Jonmes & Sims Undertakers
14. The Regency Saloon
15. Lamb's Trading Post
16. Capston's Saddlery



Name	Blake Stern	**STR 8**	**DEX 6**	**END 7**	**INT 8**	**EDU 4**	**SOC 6**
Age 38							
Skills	Admin 1, Animals (riding) 1, Deception 1, Gun Combat (shotgun) 1, Persuade 2, Streetwise 2						
Equipment	Contents of store, Springfield Trapdoor Shotgun						

Most people in town consider George to be a fool. He's a keen observer of human behaviour, though, and knows more about the comings and goings in town than most. If befriended, he's a useful source of background information and advice.

Joe left downriver to Madison, where he spends his days drinking and complaining about Ward. He'll sell the house and farmland he owns at Bent River at a fraction of their actual value to any man who puts a bullet in Ward. Hell, he'll thrown in George too as part of the furnishings.

3. Sheriff's Office & Town Jail

The building of a jail and the hiring of a sheriff was, in better days, one step on a Bent River's growth towards maturity, but that seems more like a joke now. The office itself is fortified, but more to protect against drunks with guns than, say, Indian raids. The jail contains several barred cells and are mostly used as drying-out tanks for the few miners that have cause to celebrate.

Sheriff Thomson Shore is old, tired, and looking forward to a quiet life. He is used to rounding up the town drunks but has not pulled his weapon in anger for years. His only deputy, John Fidlar, is much younger but takes advantage of the sheriff's lack of interest in the job to line his own pockets when he can. There is not much wealth in Bent River these days, but Fidlar is not beyond shaking down strangers or accepting bribes to look the other way, and he has recently begun making a fair extra wage from accepting money from both the Riverboat's Rest and the Regency saloons to look the other way during their ongoing feud.

Name	Thomson Shore	**STR 8**	**DEX 5**	**END 6**	**INT 6**	**EDU 5**	**SOC 7**
Age 57							
Skills	Admin 1, Animals (riding) 1, Gun Combat (slug pistol) 1, Persuade 2, Streetwise 0						
Equipment	Colt 'Army'						

Name	John Fidlar	**STR 7**	**DEX 9**	**END 8**	**INT 9**	**EDU 4**	**SOC 5**
Age 24							
Skills	Animals (riding) 2, Athletics (co-ordination) 1, Deception 2, Gun Combat (shotgun) 1, Gun Combat (slug pistol) 2, Persuade 1, Streetwise 2, Survival 1						
Equipment	Colt 'Buntline Special,' Hartford Cowboy Shotgun						

Shore's wife Louisa is, oddly, Fidlar's biggest supporter. She fears that some young punk will one day ride into town and cause trouble, and that her husband will end up dead in the dirt. She would much prefer for Fidlar to become sheriff and take the risks and responsibilities associated with that silver star.

4. Bent River Saloon

The Bent River Saloon is the original establishment of its type in the town, and the most sorry looking. Much of the miner's gold now goes to its rivals, the Riverboat's Rest and the Regency. However, if wanderers can ignore the faded paintwork and suspicious meat in the stew, this saloon is usually the quieter and safer of all three.

The saloon follows the traditional pattern, from the swing doors to the upright 'pianner' in the corner (there might even be an elderly piano player whose sole task is to stop playing suddenly whenever a stranger moseys into the saloon). The bar is located on the left-hand side of the saloon, with towels and spittoons lined up alongside, one per four customers. A brass rail runs along the bar at foot-height, for patrons to rest their boot-heels on. A large mirror, called the altar, stands behind the bar, and light is provided by hanging kerosene lamps.

The Bent River Saloon also operates as a proper hotel. As with the rest of the service, if a newcomer can stand the squeaking of old bed frames and the occasional bed mite, he can likely expect a peaceful night and filling breakfast.

The proprietor is the highly religious Paul Marchante, who is painfully aware of the business he loses to the other saloons but refuses to descend into the 'filthy trades' they ply. Instead, he offers his patrons peace and quiet, and the protection of the Almighty himself, aided by staff who at least know which end of a pistol to hold.

5. St. John's Church

This church was built by donations from the first settlers of Bent River, suitably cowed by the force of personality of its first and so far only pastor, Michael Darlington. Church pastors are expected to give entertaining sermons from the pulpit, and Darlington is no exception, having no problems with singling out any resident of the town for ridicule if he feels a correction in behaviour is needed.

Darlington is gregarious and friendly with his flock, and a literal holy terror to anyone who gains his ire. If someone acts in a sinful way, Darlington will soon make sure the whole town gets to hear about it, and has an uncanny knack of getting proprietors of shops and services to refuse to trade with an individual until the pastor believes penance has been paid. His current fixation is with the Riverboat's Rest and the Regency saloons whom, along with Paul Marchante (in which he has a strong ally), he believes are traders in nothing less than pure inequity and sin.

6. Wing Shu Laundry

A family run business headed by Wing Shu Ho, this establishment handles the clothes refreshing service that most miners badly need and is the centre of the Chinese community (such as it is) of bent River. Encouraged by James Ward of the Regency to use his overseas contacts, Ho also uses the laundry as a centre of operations for his opium distribution, of which the Regency

Name	Paul Marchante	**STR 5**	**DEX 7**	**END 6**	**INT 7**	**EDU 7**	**SOC 8**
Age 42							
Skills	Animals 0, Gun Combat (slug pistol) 2, Persuade 1, Streetwise 1						
Equipment	Remington Elliot						

Name	Michael Darlington	**STR 5**	**DEX 7**	**END 6**	**INT 7**	**EDU 7**	**SOC 8**
Age 46							
Skills	Animals (riding) 1, Gambler 1, Gun Combat 0, Investigate 1, Persuade 3, Streetwise 0						
Equipment	Bible, Crucifix						

is his main customer. Ho understands very little English (just enough to get by in the laundry business), and Burge's ability to make himself understood by the Chinese man is a source of constant wonder to the Regency's staff.

7. Smamson's Horses

This livery stable provides horses for sale or hire, as well as providing stabling and grooming for a small ($10/day) fee. A horse can be hired for $25 a day, though the choice is never wide or varied, and the horses left to be hired in the first place are usually those that have difficulty in being sold…

Jack Smamson is a recent arrival to Bent River, having purchased the stable cheaply from its previous owner who had despaired of the town ever reversing its fortunes. Ever the optimist, Smamson believes there is far more gold in the area and spends a lot of time in the saloons with miners, hoping to hear of the next great strike that will propel the town (and his business) onwards.

Smamson's wife, Deborah, helps him run the business. She's much tougher than he is; she minds the money, and when trouble threatens she's faster to lay hand to a rifle than her husband. She's also famously beautiful; James Ward lusts after her, and once made unwelcome advances towards her. She does not accompany her husband to the Regency any more – it wouldn't be good for the livery stable if she punched the richest businessman in the nose (again).

8. Bent River Bank

The bank shut down two years ago after a robbery. Technically, it is still open – twice a month or so, a pinch-faced banker called Witherman comes up from Sioux City on a stagecoach and unlocks the bank for a day or two, taking deposits from those miners sensible and sober enough to save their dollars. The stagecoach is always heavily guarded by at least a dozen armed men, and Witherman changes the day he visits every so often that bandits cannot plan an ambush. He openly despises most folk who live in the town; the only reason he keeps the bank open like this is so he can visit the Regency. He's friendly with James Ward, and they always spend time together to do a little business.

9. Riverboat's Rest Saloon

Run by Patrick Brennan, a recent immigrant from Donegal (Ireland), the Riverboat's Rest was founded from the start to separate miners from their gold. As well as being a traditional saloon, the Rest has a strong gambling theme. Faro is the main game played here, though poker is popular with those from out of town. The place is riddled with spy-holes so that cheats and thieves can be spotted easily; those caught tend to face brutal treatment at the hands of Brennan's enforcers.

Brennan is currently pitched in a running feud with James Ward of the Regency, over financial control of Bent River, and each seeks to find a way to buy the other one out. A handful of enforcers on both sides have already met their end as arguments have spiralled out of control, and Brennan has taken a strong objection to Ward's use of the Chinese in Bent River to gain control of the drug trade. He plans to counter this by bringing prostitutes into the town, thereby directly competing with the Regency. Brennan's enforcers are already preparing for the inevitable war that will follow.

Name	Wing Shu Ho	**STR 8**	**DEX 6**	**END 8**	**INT 10**	**EDU 9**	**SOC 3**
Age 39							
Skills	Deception 2, Gambler 2, Melee (blades) 2, Persuade 1, Streetwise 3						
Equipment	2 Small blades						

Name	Jack Smamson	**STR 5**	**DEX 7**	**END 6**	**INT 7**	**EDU 7**	**SOC 8**
Age 23							
Skills	Animals (riding) 2, Animals (training) 3, Deception 1, Gun Combat 0, Persuade 1, Streetwise 0, Survival 1						
Equipment	Lasso						

Name	Deborah Smamson	**STR 5**	**DEX 8**	**END 6**	**INT 9**	**EDU 5**	**SOC 8**
Age 20							
Skills	Animals (riding) 1, Animals (training) 2, Gun Combat (slug rifles) 1, Persuade 2, Streetwise 1						
Equipment	Lasso, Springfield Carbine						

Name	Arnold Witherman	**STR 5**	**DEX 8**	**END 6**	**INT 9**	**EDU 5**	**SOC 8**
Age 42							
Skills	Animals 0, Deception 2, Gun Combat 0, Persuade 2, Streetwise 1						
Equipment	$450, Adams 'Service'						

It is perhaps telling that neither Brennan nor Ward consider the Bent River Saloon as a threat to their plans.

10. Gallows
A simple platform in the centre of Bent River, the gallows is a constant reminder of the hand of the law, though Deputy Fidlar's approach to crime means only the poorest tend to see the rough end of the rope.

11. Slim's Corral
A corral for cattle on the edge of town run by Jake Slim, an old cowpuncher from back east. His horse trod on his foot a few years ago, it got infected, and now he's hobbling around too lame to ride. He knows cows better than most men, so he runs the corral (and also serves as the town's vet and de facto doctor). A genial, even-tempered man more at ease with animals than people. Slim is well liked by most people in town. He usually drinks at the Bent River Saloon, and prays at St. John's church, but he also secretly visits the Regency regularly. He's in love with one of the girl there, a fancy woman named Molly Diamond, and dreams of marrying her and taking her away from her sordid fallen ways. Molly has little interest in the attentions of a penniless lame cowboy.

Slim's convinced himself that the hateful James West is keeping Molly from confessing her true feelings. This belief poisons his mind, and the normally calm Slim now dreams of killing Ward to free Molly.

12. Bent River Farriers
The town's blacksmith is a grim titan of a man called Mathias Hodrow. His wife died three years ago – Hodrow says it was a fever, but there was clearly something more to the matter. Rumours in town claim that she was murdered, or ran off with another man, or murdered while running off, or something stranger. Whatever the truth is, he struck out west with his teenage son Saul to find a new life for himself. Mathias is a regular at the Bent River saloon and the Riverboat's Rest; his dour features give him the perfect poker face. His best friend in town is Jake Slim.

Hodrow is a skilled smith, but his son Saul has no interest in learning an honest trade. The boy spends most of his days in the company of young thugs like Brent Skipperton, whoring and drinking and starting fights. Hodrow despairs of finding a way to set the boy right.

The truth is worse than Mathias suspects – Brent Skipperton is in contact with the McGarry gang, and will soon lead Saul into a life of murder and theft. See The McGarry Gang, page 23.

13. Jones & Sims Undertakers
With the danger inherent in mining and the departure of the town's only doctor, business is looking up for Jones & Sims, two lifelong friends who have put their knowledge of carpentry to good use. No doubt they will be overjoyed when they discover the carnage players are capable of…

Jones is the front man for the firm, and he lends it an air of dignified respect. He is not the type to lurk at the edge of a gunfight waiting for the bodies to hit the grounds, but never seems far from the recently deceased, turning up with hat in hand and very sorry for anyone's loss.

Sims, on the other hand, is disturbed and the only one who understands his friendship with Jones is probably Jones. Sims is an undertaker because that is the only profession he would

Name	Patrick Brennan	**STR 8**	**DEX 6**	**END 11**	**INT 8**	**EDU 5**	**SOC 8**
Age 44							
Skills	Animals 0, Carouse 2, Deception 3, Gambling 2, Gun Combat (slug pistols) 2, Persuade 3, Streetwise 3, Survival 1						
Equipment	Colt 'Shopkeeper'						

Name	Jake Slim	**STR 6**	**DEX 5**	**END 7**	**INT 4**	**EDU 6**	**SOC 6**
Age 46							
Skills	Animals (training) 2, Carouse 1, Gambling 1, Gun Combat 0, Medic 0, Persuade 1, Streetwise 1						
Equipment	Bowie Knife						

Name	Mathias Hodrow	**STR 11**	**DEX 5**	**END 10**	**INT 7**	**EDU 5**	**SOC 6**
Age 46							
Skills	Animals 0, Gambler 2, Gun Combat 0, Persuade 1, Streetwise 1, Trade (farrier) 3						
Equipment	Hartford Cowboy Shotgun						

Name	Saul Hodrow	**STR 6**	**DEX 7**	**END 8**	**INT 5**	**EDU 5**	**SOC 6**
Age 28							
Skills	Animals 0, Carouse 2, Deception 1, Gambler 0, Gun Combat (slug pistols) 1, Streetwise 2, Trade (farrier) 1						
Equipment	Colt 'Shopkeeper'						

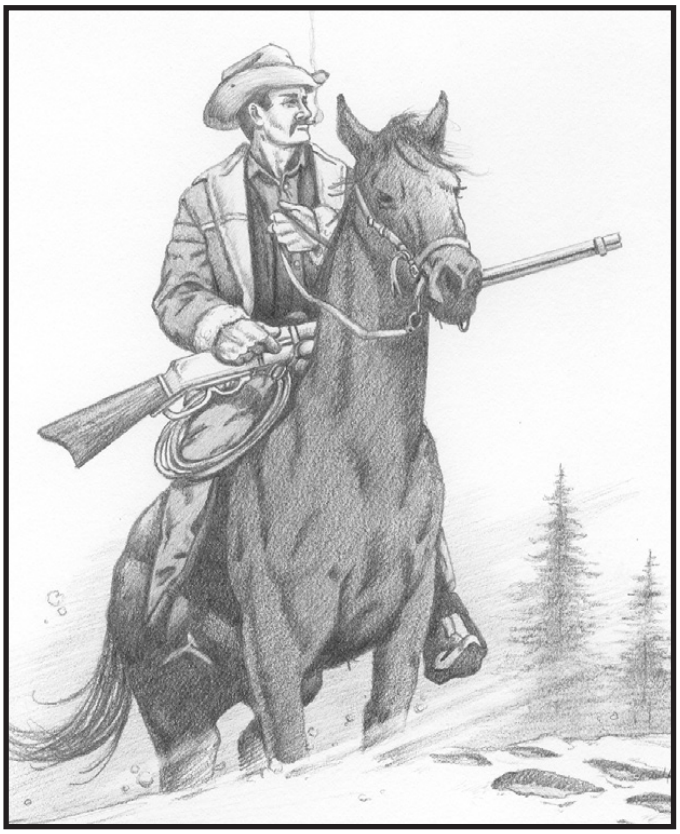
ever fit into; the dead fascinate him. He is a quiet man, though prone to mumbling under his breath, and he has a nasty habit of trying to surreptitiously measure any new arrival in town, taking their vital statistics and jotting them down on scraps of paper he keeps in his jacket pocket. If anyone one were to investigate, they might well find a new coffin is in production, designed for someone of those exact measurements. Needless to say, some people may find that a little unnerving.

The town's dead are buried up on Tomb Hill.

14. The Regency Saloon

The third saloon of Bent River, the Regency concentrates on prostitution to oppose the Riverboat's Rest's gambling. It is sometimes hard to tell which is more popular.

Residents of Bent River vary in their attitudes towards the Regency, calling it anything from whorehouse or cathouse, to bordello or brothel. Nevertheless, it has become a fixture in Bent River. The prostitutes, euphemised varyingly as fancy women, soiled doves or fallen angels (the latter being particularly favoured by Pastor Darlington, are fairly respected in Bent River – the scarcity of women in general brings out some small measure of chivalry in the miners. However, that does not stop the women from having a knife or small pistol close by at all times, and anyone who hurts one of them and



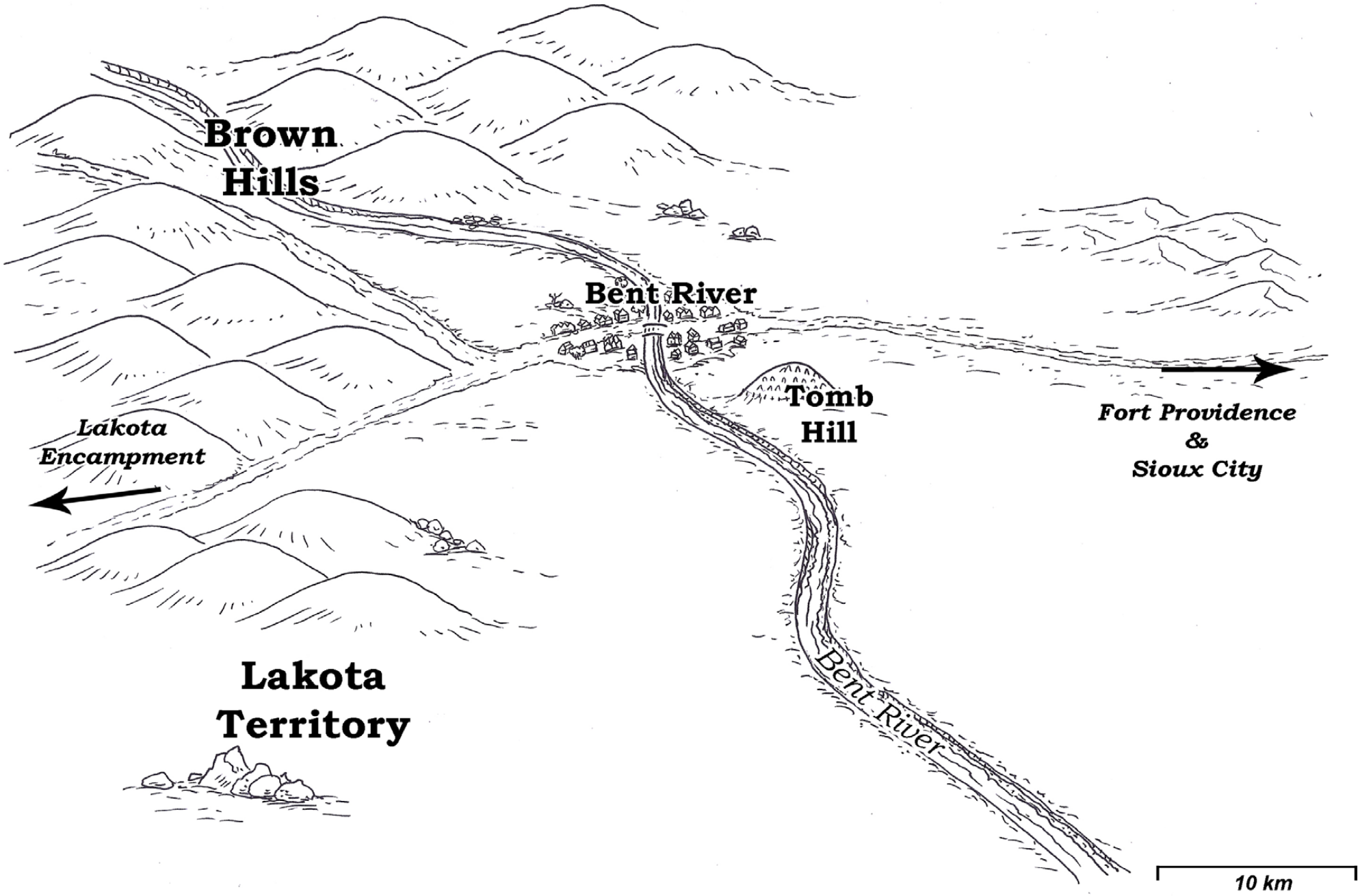
Name	Mr Jones	**STR 9**	**DEX 8**	**END 5**	**INT 6**	**EDU 3**	**SOC 7**
Age 36							
Skills	Animals 0, Gambling 1, Gun Combat 0, Persuade 1, Streetwise 1, Trade (undertakers) 3						
Equipment							

Name	Mr Sims	**STR 7**	**DEX 6**	**END 7**	**INT 10**	**EDU 3**	**SOC 4**
Age 36							
Skills	Deception 1, Investigate 1, Melee (blades) 1, Recon 1, Stealth 2, Streetwise 1, Trade (undertakers) 3						
Equipment	Small blade						

Name	James Ward	**STR 8**	**DEX 9**	**END 10**	**INT 8**	**EDU 5**	**SOC 8**
Age 39							
Skills	Animals 0, Carouse 1, Deception 3, Gambling 1, Gun Combat (slug pistols) 2, Leadership 2, Melee (blades) 2, Persuade 2, Streetwise 3						
Equipment	Bowie Knife, Starr 'Army'						

Name	Stephen Lamb	**STR 8**	**DEX 9**	**END 10**	**INT 8**	**EDU 5**	**SOC 8**
Age 28							
Skills	Animals (riding) 1, Broker 2, Deception 1, Gambling 1, Gun Combat (slug pistols) 1, Melee (blades) 1, Persuade 2, Recon 1, Streetwise 1						
Equipment	Bowie Knife, Starr 'Army'						

Name	Reggie Capston	**STR 7**	**DEX 4**	**END 9**	**INT 5**	**EDU 3**	**SOC 6**
Age 28							
Skills	Animals 0, Carouse 2, Deception 1, Gambling 1, Gun Combat (slug rifles) 3, Melee (unarmed) 1						
Equipment	Bowie Knife, Winchester 'Yellow Boy'						


Brown Hills
Bent River
Tomb Hill
Fort Providence & Sioux City
Lakota Encampment
Lakota Territory
Bent River
10 km

runs will meet a painful death from Ward's enforcers. James Ward has a very strict rule that the only one allowed to beat on his girls is himself…

Determined to drive Brennan and the Riverboat's Rest out of business, Ward has started to look at other avenues for cash flow in Bent River. He is aware that Lamb's Trading post in indebted to Brennan and has countered by involving the Chinese in drug trading. He has made moves to take over the General Store, but Blake has forcibly (and loudly) rejected any moves.

Though Deputy Fidlar is in the pay of both Brennan and Ward, Ward has made sure he pays the lawman more. In a dispute, the law usually comes down on the side of the Regency.

15. Lamb's Trading Post

Originally part of a network of trading posts established by gold traders, Stephen Lamb has since had to diversify as the fortunes of Bent River change. A few independent trappers working in the surrounding wilderness sometimes bring their furs to the post to exchange for goods and money, and it is still the main port of call for the few miners who do not spend their gold in town. Lamb is anxious to find a new source of revenue, one with potential for real profits, as he has only been able to continue trading due to punishing loans given to him by Patrick Brennan of the Riverboat's Rest.

16. Capston's Saddlery

The saddle was one of the cowboy's most prized possessions, and the saddlemaker was a respected craftsman. Reggie Capston's probably the worst saddlemaker in the whole state, but no-one dares tell him that. He's a crack shot and a mean drunk, and anyone who complains about his work risks getting Reggie's blood up – and when Reggie's blood is up, his guns come out.

He hates the local Lakota with a passion, just like he hates black men, yellow men (like that opium-sucking thief in the Laundry), Irish men, Frenchies, greenhorns from the east, Californians, miners, whores, rich men, poor men, and pretty much anything that walks, crawls, swims or flies under the sun. Oddly, for a man so full of hate, he is a committed churchgoer, and is front and centre in St. John's every Sunday in his best suit.

One of the Lakota, Charlie Tanner, is a skilled leatherworker who can make excellent saddles. Capston takes pot-shots at anyone he sees sitting on one of Tanner's handiworks.

Beyond Bent River

Out west and north of Bent River are the Brown Hills, a wilderness of narrow ravines, treacherous defiles and trickling streams. The Lakota claim some of these hills as a sacred

The McGarry Gang

Somewhere in the Brown Hills is the hideout of the McGarry gang, a band of outlaws led by a notorious thief and murderer called Glen McGarry. A few years ago, McGarry robbed the Bent River Bank. Sheriff Shore led a posse; they tracked McGarry into Lakotan territory, captured him, and brought him back to hang.

On the night before his execution, McGarry made a deal with Deputy Fidlar. If Fidlar helped him escape, McGarry would tell Fidlar where he hid the money from the bank robbery. Fidlar agreed, and the next morning, one of McGarry's men was hung in his place wearing a bag over his head. The other prisoners were sent to Sioux City prison, and Fidlar was able to convince the authorities there that one of the prisoners escaped on the way. As far as anyone in Bent River is concerned, McGarry has been lying up on Tomb Hill for more than a year.

McGarry fled the district, but has recently returned to his old haunts. Sheriff Shore fears McGarry – he hanged the man once, and now it seems he's returned as a ghost. Fidlar gained the taste for crooked dealings from his bargain with McGarry, and now wants to put the outlaw down to ensure his own reputation is not damaged.

McGarry is a cruel, dumb thug whose biggest advantage is his utter lack of compassion or morality. He will do anything to survive, and is always willing to push a confrontation to the next level. He's the sort who throws a punch in an argument, who draws a knife in a fist-fight, who shoots a man who draws a knife on him, and who murders the family of anyone who draws a gun on him. Overkill is his middle name. He fought for the North in the war, but was dishonourably discharged for his barbaric methods.

Name	Glen McGarry	**STR 7**	**DEX 8**	**END 8**	**INT 7**	**EDU 3**	**SOC 4**
Age 33							
Skills	Animals (riding) 2, Carouse 2, Gun Combat (slug pistols) 3, Melee (blades) 2, Recon 1, Stealth 1, Streetwise 2, Survival 1						
Equipment	Bowie Knife, Colt 'Peacemaker,' Light Horse, Sharps Carbine						

The Gang: The new McGarry gang consists of McGarry himself, plus one bandit per player. Two young men from town, Brent Skipperton and Saul Hodrow, are also secretly in contact with the gang. McGarry uses them as spies. He intends to try robbing the Bent River bank, or the stagecoach that serves it, or maybe that rich Regency whorehouse, or those miners with their bags of gold. There's money to be made in this godforsaken town, even if you have to wring people's necks to get it.

Name	Bandit	**STR 7**	**DEX 7**	**END 8**	**INT 6**	**EDU 4**	**SOC 7**
Age 26							
Skills	Animals (riding) 1, Carouse 1, Gun Combat (slug pistols) 1, Melee (blades) 1, Recon 1, Streetwise 1, Survival 1						
Equipment	Bowie Knife, Colt 'Peacemaker,' Light Horse, Sharps Carbine						

place. Miners and prospectors search for gold in the hills. There have been a few lucky strikes in the past, but no-one's gotten rich here in years.

South and west is the Lakota territory. The Lakota are a confederation of Sioux tribes; they are nomadic hunters, with their hunting centred around the buffalo. Plague and wars with settlers and soldiers from the east have greatly reduced the Lakotan numbers; after a series of conflicts, the tribes signed the Treaty of Fort Laramie with the United States, which ensured that the tribes' hunting grounds and the sacred sites would be theirs forever. The discovery of gold brought many prospectors to the region, and tensions are rising again. There is a Lakota encampment on the far side of the hills to the west.

Due east of Bent River is the small military outpost of Fort Providence; the nearest big town is Sioux City, three days ride away.

Folk of Bent River and the Wilderness

What follows are details of some other notable personalities of Bent River, along with a collection of general non-player characters the referee can quickly use if needed.

Name	Drunk Troublemaker	**STR 7**	**DEX 6**	**END 8**	**INT 6**	**EDU 3**	**SOC 5**
Age 27							
Skills	Animals 0, Carouse 2, Gun Combat (slug pistols) 1, Melee (blades) 1, Persuade 1, Streetwise 1						
Equipment	Bowie Knife, Colt 'Army'						

Name	Fallen Angel	**STR 5**	**DEX 9**	**END 7**	**INT 8**	**EDU 5**	**SOC 9**
Age 19							
Skills	Carouse 0, Deception 2, Gun Combat 0, Melee 0, Persuade 2, Recon 1, Streetwise 2, Trade (whorin') 0						
Equipment	Small Blade, Remington-Elliot						

Name	Lakota Brave	**STR 8**	**DEX 8**	**END 8**	**INT 7**	**EDU 4**	**SOC 6**
Age 21							
Skills	Animals (riding) 2, Animals (training) 1, Athletics (co-ordination) 2, Gun Combat (slug rifles) 1, Melee (blades) 2, Recon 1, Stealth 1, Survival 2						
Equipment	Hatchet, Indian Trade Musket, Light Horse						

Name	Miner	**STR 7**	**DEX 6**	**END 8**	**INT 7**	**EDU 3**	**SOC 6**
Age 49							
Skills	Animals 0, Carouse 1, Explosives 2, Gambler 1, Gun Combat (slug rifles) 1, Melee 0, Persuade 1, Survival 1, Trade (miner) 2						
Equipment	Hawken 'Plains Rifle,' Mining Equipment						

Name	Saloon Enforcer	**STR 9**	**DEX 7**	**END 9**	**INT 6**	**EDU 4**	**SOC 7**
Age 26							
Skills	Animals (riding) 1, Carouse 1, Gun Combat (slug pistols) 2, Melee (blades) 2, Persuade 1, Recon 1, Streetwise 2						
Equipment	Bowie Knife, Colt 'Peacemaker'						

Name	Young Gun	**STR 7**	**DEX 8**	**END 7**	**INT 6**	**EDU 4**	**SOC 6**
Age 17							
Skills	Animals (riding) 1, Carouse 1, Gun Combat (slug pistols) 1, Melee (blades) 1, Melee (unarmed) 1, Streetwise 1						
Equipment	Colt 'Lightning', Light Horse, Throwing Knife						

General Events

When the players enter Bent River, run the first event below, A Warm Welcome. This will serve to introduce the players to the town and get the ball rolling. After that, you can run any of the other events in pretty much any order you like, fitting in with the players' movements and decisions. Move onto the next section, *Cowboys vs Xenomorphs,* when the characters end up exploring the Brown Hills. Several events point the characters towards the hills.

Your aim as the referee is to keep the action going, while lulling the players into a false sense of security. It is just another Wild West setting, as far as they are concerned.

A Note on Timing

You can run *Cowboys vs. Xenomorphs* as a one-shot, or string it out into four or more game sessions (or even turn it into a whole campaign). Whatever you do though, it is important to have the xenomorphs turn up at a satisfying point in the adventure. If you leave the twist too long, then it will feel tacked-on and silly – if the players have spent final game sessions playing a gritty, down-to-earth western and you suddenly drop Martians on them for the final week, it'll just seem annoying. By contrast, three or four sessions of gritty Western action followed by two or three games of alien action that resolves and completes all the plotlines developed in the earlier sessions sounds like fun. Make the arrival of the aliens a twist, not a shift to a completely different game.

It's also important to drop a little bit of foreshadowing, even if the players do not pick up on it. Throw in references that will, in hindsight, show that the aliens were lurking in the background even before they appeared 'on stage'.

A Warm Welcome

The players will enter Bent River from the eastern end just after noon, wilting from the sun and desperate for water, food and, maybe, a decent shave and bath.

As you ride into Bent River, you pass a row of buildings on either side of the dirt track that serves as the town's main street. On the left, there lies a building under the proud black and white sign 'Blake's General Store.' Next to it, a smaller building bears the sign 'Sheriff.' Beyond that, the town opens up, with buildings placed beyond the main street, including the Bent River Saloon to right, which hopefully promises a cool drink for your parched throats. As you tie up your horses to the rail outside, a group of four young men chatting among themselves walk out of the saloon.

These young men are sons of various miners and prospectors and the most pugnacious of them, Brent Skipperton, is nothing more than a bully who likes to see how far he can push things with any new arrivals in town. They saw the players tie up their horses while in the saloon, and decided to have some fun.

They appear to take no notice of the players, but Brent will 'accidentally' walk into one of the players. He will immediately turn towards the player and, standing very close while putting a hand on his pistol, say;

'Watch where you're going, you stupid fool.'

This is a deliberate challenge. If the player tries to apologise, Brent will adopt a serious face and tell him where he can go stuff his apologies, before going on to describe how he will kick the player's rear end from one end of the town to the other. If the player still does not react, Brent will knock his hat off his head and walk off, laughing with his friends. However, from this point on, they will treat the players as easy targets, constantly showing up at inopportune moments to ridicule the players and generally make their lives difficult.

If the players do react, Brent's demeanour will change. Though he carries a gun, he has never shot at anyone in his life, and has no wish to die in Bent River. On the other hand, he has no problem with a fist fight, and he and his friends will gladly wade in, so long as no weapons are drawn.

If weapons appear, Brent and his friends will run for their lives, and give the players a wide berth. If they are defeated in a fist fight, they will start to treat the players with some respect (or, at least, what passes for respect among them).

Use the entry for Young Guns on p24 for Brent and his friends.

An Ominous Quiet

Best played shortly after the players arrive in Bent River, in the Bent River Saloon.

When the players enter the saloon for the first time, there are a few scattered patrons, mostly miners and prospectors trying to forget about their lack of success by drinking what remains of their money. No one is at the saloon's piano, and the air of despair is fairly palpable.

Paul Marchante is tending the bar, and will fill the players in on recent events of the town. While he serves their drinks, he will let them know the general sorry state of most claims and the lack of money coming into the town. Then he will let them in on a terrible event that happened just two night's ago.

'It was dreadful. Harden and his men said they had found a new seam in their northern claim, and damn near bought Blake's entire store of dynamite. Told everyone here they would be back in a week, with carts of gold.

'That very night, there was a massive explosion, everyone in the town heard it. Those outdoors at the time say there was a big fireball to the north, right where Harden was working, so bright it lit up the sky, though it had died down by the time I rushed outside.

'Poor Harden. Seems this place is cursed, everything seems to go wrong. Guessing one of his men got drunk before they started work, and did something stupid with the dynamite. No doubt Brennan and Ward will be fighting over the claim now, much good it will do them.'

The bright flash was not Harden and his men blowing themselves up, but the Xenomorph's spaceship crashing, coming down pretty much on their heads. They are indeed dead, but the town will soon have bigger problems than an errant gold claim.

Claim Jumping

An eccentric miner named Black Pete limps into town, coughing and spluttering and complaining about the McGarry gang. According to Pete's account, he found silver nuggets in one of the stream-beds in the hills. He gathered a bag full of the nuggets, and was planning on setting up camp there, but then armed men came out of the hills and drove him off. He insists the gang was led by Glen McGarry, and says they stole his bag of silver.

Pete first visits the sheriff's office, hoping that the lawmen will raise a posse and ride out to catch the outlaws and recover Pete's claim. However, Sheriff Shore's wife argues that it's too dangerous for her husband to go, and Deputy Fidlar has no interest in the ramblings of a crazy old '49er who doesn't have the money to pay any bribes.

Black Pete ends up in the saloons, where he slides down the totem pole of quality. They throw him out of the Regency when he runs out of money, they throw him out of the Riverboat's Rest when he cheats at cards, and he ends up in the corner of the Bent River saloon, living on charity from St. John's and haranguing anyone who'll listen that there is a fortune in silver out there, if only anyone was brave enough to ride back to the riverbed with him. Pete's health gets markedly worse over time, but he does not seem to have any fever or disease.

If the players do accompany Pete into the hills (possibly running the Lakota Encounter below), they find his camp abandoned. There is no sign of the McGarry gang, and perhaps more importantly, no sign of the silver than Pete claimed littered the stream bed. The miner has no money to pay the players for their time.

Searching around (Int + Recon) lets the players find one nugget of silvery metal hidden in a crack in the ground. It is not silver – it is too heavy for that. There is no assayer's office in Bent River, but if a character goes to the trouble of riding down to Sioux City, they can have the nugget analysed. The chemist in the assayer's office there is baffled, and has no idea what the metal might be. It is definitely not silver, or platinum, or anything else he knows.

The silvery metal is actually debris from the alien spaceship. It's mildly radioactive, which accounts for Pete's poor health. Any character who keeps the silvery nugget develops slight radiation burns.

Lakota Encounter

While in the wilderness outside Bent River, the players will begin to realise they are being shadowed by a single rider on

horseback; every now and again, they see him silhouetted against the sun on top of a hill, or galloping at speed far on their flank. Without a telescope, it is impossible to see details, but they can be fairly sure it is the same rider every time.

If they try to chase after the man, they will soon find out he is a superb rider on a very fast horse. He easily eludes them.

However, later that day, they will encounter the rider close up, either as they crest a hill or round a corner in ravine.

A tan-skinned man sits upon a saddleless horse, waiting patiently for you. His hair is long and dark, and has several eagle feathers tucked into it so they fan out to one side of his head. Bare-chested, he has a rifle slung casually over his shoulder and a wicked looking hatchet tucked into his belt. He raises a hand to you, palm out, indicating you should stop, and speaks in a strange accent.

'You should go no further. The greed of the white man is well known to us and he has no knowing of what his actions may bring.'

This is Red Cloud, a brave from the local Lakota tribe. You can use the entry on p24 for a Lakota Brave, but Red Cloud is not here to fight. He has no concept of what a xenomorph truly is, but the Lakota Indians know something dark and menacing has awoken in the Brown Hills, and they believe the miners and prospectors from Bent River are responsible.

If the players are rude and insulting, Red Cloud will give them a condescending look and ride off – but he will remember their faces, probably to their detriment later on.

If, on the other hand, the players are curious and wish to start a dialogue with the Lakota, Red Cloud will not be prepared to give much away at this point. He will warn them to turn back and keep to their town, and encourage others to do so because 'the land is angry at their intrusion, and dark spirits walk the ground.'

If they try to follow Red Cloud after the meeting, his superior knowledge of the surrounding area will mean they do not get far. However, they will have another chance to meet the Lakota tribe later on.

Dead Horses

Several horses go missing from Slim's corral (or the characters' own horses vanish in the night). Searching around for several hours (requiring a Difficult (-2) Intelligence + Survival roll) finds the remains of the horses – they have been hacked to pieces! Weirdly, looking at them, several of the horses have broken legs, as though they fell from a height, but there is not so much as a lone pine tree, let alone a cliff within a mile of this spot.

A close examination of the dead horses may reveal something about the alien threat:

- Perfect Organisms: The horses were used to incubate immature warriors. Something burst out of the horses' chests. *
- Hunters: The horses were all speared – maybe the Lakota did it, but since when do they use long metal spears?
- Martians: The horses were incinerated after they were killed.
- Body Thieves: One of the horses is still alive and unharmed. Strangely, though, it will react to its owner as though he were a dangerous enemy, shying away in terror, even though yesterday it was a loyal and loving animal.

* Referee Note: If you use the words 'chest' and 'burst,' your players will lock on to what is going on like a guided missile, which will spoil the surprise later on. However, their characters have no reason to think anything *can* just burst out from a chest, so should naturally presume something like a set of clamps was forced into the chest to peel it back outwards – for no reason they can guess.

Trouble on the Horizon

A patrol of cavalry from Fort Providence rides through town, coming from the pass in the hills that leads to Lakota country. They are on their way back to Fort Providence, and stop overnight in Bent River. The cavalrymen crowd into the town's saloons to wash away the dust of the trail from their throats.

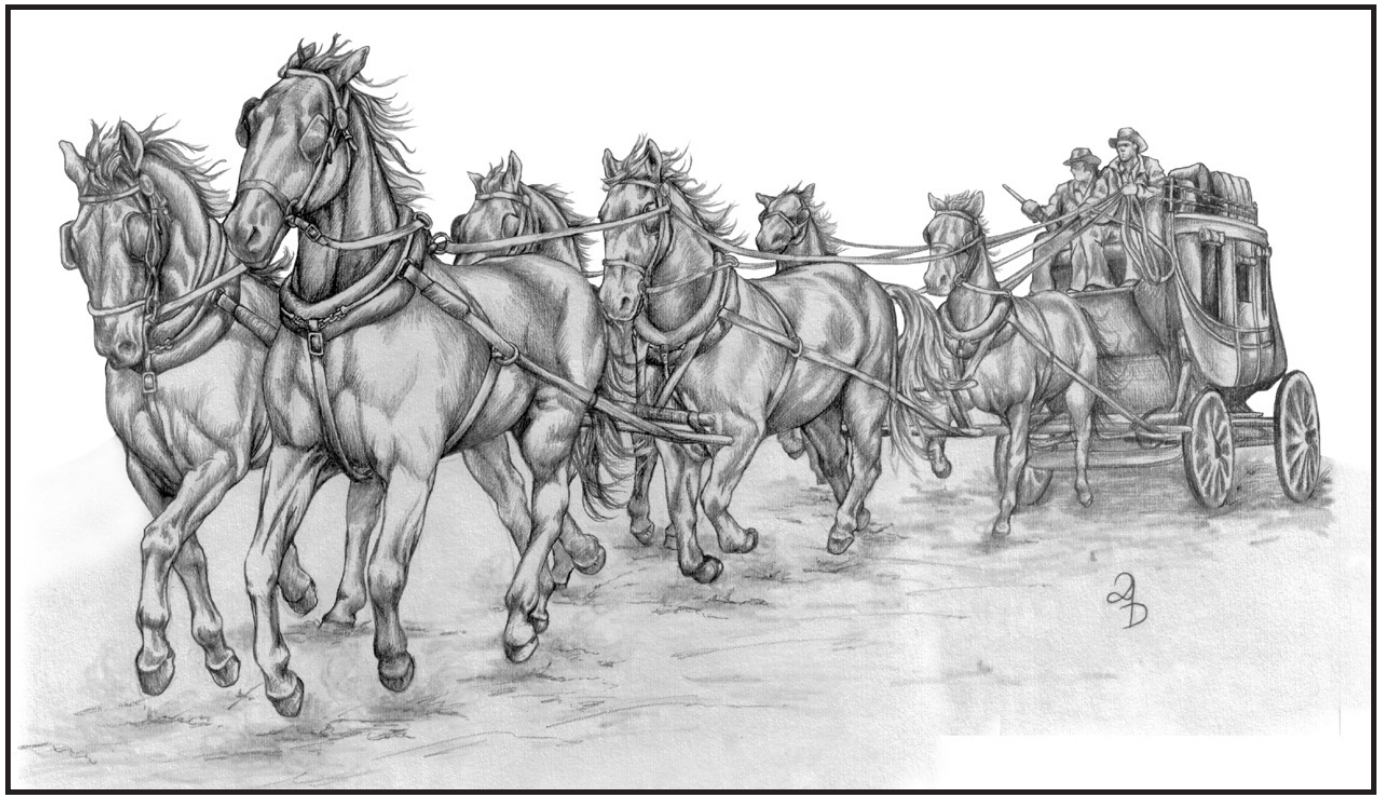
Their leader, Lieutenant Steel, warns of potential trouble with the Lakota. '*Those savages are restless*,' he says, '*and object to you miners working in those hills. Still, we can't let those heathens stand in the way of progress. The treaty says they've got to become civilised men, and that's how it will be. They can live as civilised men or die wild and free.'*

He warns the miners to stay clear of the hills for a few days, just to let tensions die down. He intends to come back with more men and make a display of strength to dissuade the Lakota from making any trouble.

Stagecoach Robbery

Aided by their two young spies in town, the McGarry gang plot a stagecoach robbery. The bank coach from Sioux City arrives according to a seemingly random schedule, but Saul Hodrow noticed that James Ward always seems to know when it's on its way, because of his close friendship with the banker, Arnold Witherman. The plan is as follows:

- Brent Skipperton and Saul take turns watching the Regency. As soon as Ward starts counting the money in his safe in the afternoon instead of first thing in the morning, they know the coach is on its way and will be there that evening.



- Saul then flies a red bedsheet from his window, signalling the gang.
- Meanwhile, Brent Skipperton makes a nuisance of himself (public drunkenness, arson, stealing a horse) to draw the lawmen away.
- The gang then ride out and ambush the coach as it approaches the town. They'll only have a small window in which to rob the coach and make off with their stolen goods.

Unless the characters keep a close watch on the Regency themselves, the first thing they hear about the attempted robbery is when one of the hired guns who escorts the stagecoach rides into town, bleeding from a gunshot wound to his leg. He tells anyone who'll listen that the coach is under attack. Getting to the ambush in time to intervene requires a successful Dex + Animals (riding) check; those who fail turn up too late to help.

The coach driver panicked and drove the coach into a ditch. It's lying on its side, wheels spinning uselessly, and the two horses still tethered to it are terrified and straining against the reins. One of the hired guns has already fled; the third gunman has taken cover with Witherman in the wrecked coach. The McGarry gang (McGarry, plus one bandit per player, see p23) surrounds the coach, laying down a wicked hail of gunfire.

If the characters present a strong front, the bandits flee. If the characters hang back, or if they don't arrive in time, then the McGarry gang escapes with a strongbox full of cash.

Either way, three things happen. First, Sheriff Shore puts a bounty on the bank robber's head (he refuses to say it was McGarry – McGarry's dead, as far as he is concerned). Second, the whole incident triggers a fearsome ruckus between Witherman, Ward and Deputy Fidlar. Witherman blames Ward for revealing when the coach was on its way, as Ward was the only man in town who knew the schedule. Ward blames Fidlar for not protecting the coach, and Fidlar blames both of them for blaming him. Third, the saloons crawl with rumours that Glen McGarry is back from the dead.

Genre Twist

If your players expect the supernatural to show up in a game, you can throw them off course with the wild rumours about McGarry rising from the dead. When the players go looking for zombie cowboys and ghost bandits, you hit them instead with alien monsters.

The Riverboat

A riverboat arrives in town, docking outside the Riverboat's Rest. On board is a medley of odd folk. A pair of professional gamblers named Colonel Blue (he's got a fancy hat and talks about his army days, but has never been anywhere near a battlefield) and Four-Finger Frank (he's got all his fingers – it's how much he drinks when he wins a hand) take up residence at the faro table in the Riverboat's Rest. A courtesan and dancer named Louisa Layborn sashays around town, looking for a rich man to buy her charms. There's also a mountebank selling

snake-oil and other patent medicines called The Amazing Doctor Panwise, a musician called Silver-tongued Harry, and leading the whole motley crew is the riverboat owner. He's a young black man who introduces himself as Fish.

Fish and his strange group travel up and down the river, visiting towns along the way. They're harmless amusement, a bit of diversion and fun in dour Bent River (optionally, you can use Silver-tongued Harry to foreshadow the aliens; he also dabbles in fortune-telling).

The arrival of the riverboat draws a lot of miners to the town for the night. Lots of money crosses the bar at all three saloons, people get drunker and rowdier, bar fights break out… and then there's the crack of a gunshot.

Someone just took a shot at James Ward. The saloon owner is not dead, but he is down. The saloon is full, so it is not clear who fired the shot, but it throws the whole town into confusion. Ward is carried to his bed, and Jake Slim and Doctor Panwise are called in to treat the wound. The next day, the town's consumed with paranoia. Who shot the most powerful man in Bent River?

- Was it Witherman, the banker, who got drunk and blamed Ward for the robbery?
- Was it Fidlar, tired of playing second fiddle to Ward?
- Was it Jake Slim, trying to free Molly?
- Was it Ward's rival, Patrick Brennan?
- Or was it someone else? Maybe the bullet was not meant for Ward.

The identity of the attacker is up to the referee (if you cannot decide, it was an ambitious Wing Shu Ho, who has decided to take his opium trade to the next level by expanding downriver). In many ways, the attempted murder is secondary to its effect on the town – the established power dynamic between Ward and Fidlar is shattered, and the town is leaderless.

Normally, that wouldn't be a problem. Like a pack of wolves, they would squabble until a new top dog emerged.

Right now, though, there's trouble on the horizon.

Widow Bruntlett

After the players have spent a few days in Bent River, they will notice a woman and small child on the western outskirts of town, standing stock still and staring towards the Brown Hills. This is Mary Bruntlett and her young daughter, Margaret.

If approached, Mary will explain that her husband, 'Black' Pete, and a few friends were supposed to have returned from prospecting in the ravines the day before. He has never been late, and she fears he has been caught up in the feud between

Brennan and Ward. She tells the players her husband would never go looking for trouble but, if challenged by one of the saloon owner's bullies, he would stand his ground. He is never late and, even if he had an accident, his friends would have come back by now. She feels something terrible has happened.

She is right, but it has nothing to do with Brennan and Ward. The xenomorphs have started ranging from their spaceship and have discovered there is sentient life in their surroundings. They are now actively looking for the source of this life (Bent River).

The Posse

Sheriff Shore organises a posse. If the stagecoach got robbed, then the aim of the posse is to catch the robbers. If the players prevented the robbery, then word reaches town that a wagon of settlers got attacked and killed by the Lakota (although some will inevitably say it was McGarry). With Fidler and most of the other lawmen busy with the Ward shooting, the Sheriff calls on the players to help him. His plan is to ride out into the hills and find who has been making trouble. Do they have the guts to go with him?

It is clear that the sheriff wants to get out of town. Battling savage Lakota is more appealing to him than watching Fidlar and Ward fighting over the dregs of Bent River. It is sad enough to see the town crucified without having to referee the dice game over its cloak.

Cowboys vs. Xenomorphs

The events in this chapter cover the introduction and escalation when the xenomorphs appear. Things will start slow, but the players will soon realise they are in deep, deep trouble!

Make sure you review the Xenomorphology chapter that follows and select exactly what kind of xenomorph you would like to appear in the adventure, as each is different and will affect how the adventure progresses. Each alien has their strategy outlined, describing how they attack Black River.

I've Seen This Before!

All the xenomorphs presented here are, shall we say, inspired by classic movie aliens. Your players have definitely seen them before. Of course, their characters have not – but don't worry about that. Just roll with it. Let the players come up with tactics for dealing with the acidic blood of the Perfect Organisms, or have one of them challenge a Hunter to a showdown, six-shooter against plasmathrower. Never say 'your character doesn't know that!' You are technically correct, but it is no fun.

Of course, some players like playing doomed characters, and they might prefer to play dumb. If a player enjoys saying 'wow! An alien in a barrel! I bet it won't hug my face! I stick my whole head in!' that is just fine. Find the right balance for your own group.

The Ambush Site

Two trails wind through the Brown Hills. The main trail leads west from Bent River. It is the easiest way through the hills, but goes straight through Lakota territory and is watched by their warriors. If the Lakota are making trouble, the west trail is not safe.

The second trail goes north-west, following the Bent River itself. It winds through narrow canyons and water-logged valleys; it floods in spring and is hard to navigate at the best of times, but you can get a caravan through there if you are stubborn and brave.

Someone tried doing just that, and they didn't make it.

The players come upon a scene of carnage. The tattered remains of a wagon lie scattered across a muddy little canyon. Scraps of cloth and fragment of wood bob on the surface of the stream, caught on rocks. Spilled blood stains the ground. It looks like it was a slaughter, not an ambush.

Searching the wreckage of the wagon reveals several very disturbing facts.

First, there is plenty of blood, but no bodies. All the corpses, both human and animal, are gone. The players will realise that the wagon was drawn by four sturdy horses; carrying away a horse carcass requires a lot of muscle.

Second, whoever attacked the wagon did not rob it. There are supplies, money, food and other goods just lying around in the wreckage. The attackers seem to have murdered the poor travellers purely for sport.

Third, judging by the spent casings lying around, the travellers put up a hell of a fight. They must have fired dozens of shots, and did not hit anything. A successful Int + Recon roll finds some trace of a wounded xenomorph (weird green stains/acid melted rocks/strange goo).

Searching around, the players find drag marks. It looks like some of the bodies were dragged up a side trail toward an abandoned mine.

The Mine

The entrance to the mine was once boarded over, but someone broke in here since. Judging by the empty whiskey bottles and bedrolls, it was used as a hideout by some other miners or bandits. It would be great if you can time this so evening if fast approaching as the players arrive.

In fact, this camp was used by Al Harden, a prospector who came out here with some men a few days ago. He and his men were the first victims of the xenomorphs.

If the players have a local guide with them, like Sheriff Shore, he says this is the back entrance to the old Snake Gulch mine. A prospector called Lucky Wally opened the mine more than twenty years ago, back when Bent River was a boom town. In fact, he dammed part of Snake Gulch to expose the dry river bed.

The tunnel goes all the way through the hill to Snake Gulch on the far side. The drag marks lead deeper into the mine.

As the players make their way through the darkness (if no-one brought a lamp, they can improvise torches), they see signs of recent cave-ins. The heavy landing of the xenomorph ship hit the mine like an earthquake. Build up the tension – the players could run into a rattlesnake or a scorpion, or parts of the unstable mine could cave in. As the players get closer to

Snake Gulch, they feel a strange tension in the air, as though a thunderstorm was about to break inside the mine itself.

There is a clear main tunnel through the mines, but there are also lots of side branches and dead ends. Watch to see if any of the players deliberately take note of the route through the mine, or leave markers so they know the quickest way back out. This will become important later.

If they start exploring all the side branches, successful Int + Navigation rolls will stop them from getting lost.

The Crashed Ship

The players come around a corner and run into a dead end. A metal wall blocks their path. Examining the weird wall, they realise that it is not just blocking the corridor – it is part of something much bigger. The crashed alien ship smashed through the hill's surface and half-buried itself in the mine.

It is not like any metal the characters have ever seen before – it was not cast or forged, but rather it looks like it was *grown*, with ribs and whorls and veins. If the players found the strange metal in Claim Jumpin (p26), you might allow them an Int check to determine that the metals are very similar. It is strange to touch, giving something like a mild electric shock. The drag marks lead right up to the wall. Experimenting with touching the ribs and whorls will eventually trigger a mechanism, causing part of the wall to hiss open, letting out a cloud of steam.

The players can step through into the hold of the crashed ship. The contents of the hold depend on your choice of xenomorph. Hunters have trophies, Martians have some really weird scientific equipment (think *probe*), Pod Things have stolen human equipment and vats of decomposing human flesh. Perfect Organisms have eggs.

Optionally, the characters might be able to liberate some gadgets from the hold, like a weapon. You can take your pick from the Central Supply Catalogue – alternatively, you can rule that such things are too complicated for the 19th Century mind, and leave the players with their six-shooters and rifles.

Climbing out of the hold, the players find themselves in a corridor running along the length of the ship's spine. Waves of heat wash down the corridor from the rear of the ship; its reactors were damaged in the crash, and are leaking heat (and radiation). The players can go that way, but it gets increasingly uncomfortable. Going the other way down the corridor brings the players to a series of cryptic rooms (crew quarters, weapons pods, sensors arrays).

Once the tension builds to a sufficiently terrifying level, unleash the aliens.

Alien Attack

This is the big reveal, the 'oh hell' moment. Make sure your xenomorph has a suitably dramatic entrance. For example…

Perfect Organism: A hugger leaps out of the shadows and grabs hold of Sheriff Shore's head. He topples backward, unable to breathe, and falls unconscious. The players hear slithering, scuttling sounds from deep within the ship… there are more of those things in there. *Lots* more.

Hunter: The air around the players shimmers, and six Hunters appear, surrounding them in a circle. One of the Hunters presses a control on its wrist, and a synthetic voice gasps out an approximation of human speech. *YOU. ARE. PREY. WE. HUNT. YOU. RUN. NOW.*

Martian: The players find Al Holden floating in a glass tank. He's been partially dissected by the bizarre aliens. They've turned his skin transparent, and several of his organs now float outside his body, connected by stringy transparent arteries and integuments. He gurgles a warning to the players, begging them to run. Holden does not know it, but the Martians drained his brain for useful information. They know about the major figures in Bent River, and have constructed a shopping list of potential abductees and mind-slaves.

A door opens behind Holden, and the players see a trio of grey-skinned figures lurking in the dim chamber beyond. They raise ruby-tipped ray guns…

Pod Things: The players find three strange corpses lying on the floor. They're human, but they're rotting before the players' eyes, as if years were passing in a fraction of a second. As the bodies decompose, Al Holden stumbles into the room. 'They're monsters! We've got to get out of here!'

This version of Al Holden is actually a Pod Duplicate, but the players don't know that yet. Holden encourages them to take him back to Bent River. On the way, he pumps them for information about the town's defences and major figures.

Hunted

The players need to get back to Bent River to raise the alarm. There are two obvious ways back – they can try retracing their steps through the mine and along the trail, or they can flee into the wilderness of the hills.

Going via the mines is faster, but requires an Int + Navigation roll to find a quick route through the dark tunnels. Failure means that the characters take a wrong turn and may be attacked by the xenomorphs.

Heading into the hills means crossing into Snake Gulch. From here, the players can see the crashed ship, embedded like a titanic iron arrowhead into the side of the hill. Clouds of weird smoke gush from its engines, and the players can see the scars it burnt into the landscape as it crashed. They need to cross the open ground in Snake Gulch, climb up the far side, and then cut back cross-country to the trail. This requires a Dex + Athletics roll, followed by an Int + Survival roll. Failing either delays the players and leaves them open to attack.

In either case, the xenomorphs pursue the players. If it was evening as the players found the mine, it will be night now, and far more terrifying. Use this scene to demonstrate the xenomorph's powers and tactics. Perfect Organisms stalk and lurk, Hunters cloak and use their ranged weapons, Martians skim along on their flying discs and snipe with their blasters, Pod Thing Drones stumble like zombies. Make it clear that the xenomorphs are not only hunting the players, they are also exploring their surroundings. They will soon find Bent River.

The Lakota

As the players flee Snake Gulch, point out that the Lakota encampment is only a few miles away. The Lakota saw the plumes of smoke from the downed ship, but assumed it was more of the White Man's devilry and did not investigate further. Some of the players could take a detour to warn them about the xenomorph threat. This means two perilous crossings of the Hills, perhaps the players will split up, with one group riding to warn the Lakota, while the rest carry on to Bent River.

If the players fail to warn the Lakota, then the xenomorphs attack their encampment before turning their attention to Bent River. In the case of Perfect Organisms or Pod Things, that means more foot soldiers for the attack on the town.

If the players do warn the Lakota, then the Lakota flee the hills and escape the xenomorph threat. However, Red Cloud and a dozen other braves travel to Bent River to lend their aid to the town's defence.

Back in Bent River

Assuming they survive, the players stumble out of the hills and arrive back in town. It's like stepping back into sanity, but madness is following close on their trail. The aliens are coming, so the players need to warn the town and prepare it for the coming onslaught. This involves two related tasks – warning the town and preparing defences.

Warning the Town

Warning the town is not necessarily easy. Do the townsfolk believe the players? Use the players' previous interactions with the townsfolk as a guide. If they showed up, got drunk and caused trouble, then their warnings will be dismissed as the ravings of drunken fools. If they've already proved themselves trustworthy and reliable, then people take them much more seriously.

Consider who the players' potential allies are. If they've crossed Deputy Fidlar, then he's less likely to stand with them. If they helped Brennan against Ward, then he'll do what he can to aid them. Those who do not trust the players may scorn the idea that the town is in danger ('*monsters from the sky? Bull!*') or just refuse to take part in any collective defence of the town ('*you ain't in charge here, so don't give me orders*'). The xenomorphs will take advantage of any isolated townsfolk. Those who stand alone get implanted with eggs, or skinned alive, or mind-controlled, or duplicated.

- The town preacher, Darlington, is potentially the best ally for the players. 19th century cowpokes have no idea about space monsters or alien invaders; the threat is an out-of-context problem for them. The preacher can put it into terms they understand – they're Satan's minions from Hell, and it is right and proper to put a bullet in them.
- Jake Slim can provide enough horses for the players to deploy a group of outriders – which could be very useful when trying to stop invading Perfect Organisms or chasing a Martian flying disc.
- Sims the Undertaker has precise measurements for everyone in town – which means he can spot those taken by the Pod Things.
- Hodrow the smith can make melee weapons and simple armour, or help barricade the buildings.
- Wing Shu Ho has lots of caustic chemicals such as lye in his laundry, which could be made into improvised weapons.

Preparing the Defences

Right now, Bent River is wide open for invasion. The players need to get it ready. The nature of these preparations depends on what they know about the xenomorphs. Perfect Organisms, for example, are lethal up close, but do not have ranged weapons. Therefore, the players need to fortify a building or several buildings to keep the monsters out, and then blast them with ranged attacks. Martians, by contrast, have lethal firearms, but are physically weak.

The players need to get firearms (from the general store or the sheriff's office), select a base of operations, and set up traps and defensive positions. Possible tactics include:

- The General Store has some dynamite. Holden's camp has lots more. There is an age-old equation in roleplaying; Dynamite + Players = Exploding Aliens. Of course, getting that dynamite means sneaking back through the xenomorph-infested hills.
- Thanks to the Ward/Brennan feud, Bent River is over-supplied with armed thugs. If the characters can get both factions to agree to co-operate, they can organise a co-ordinated defence.
- Fortifying key buildings, like the bank or the Regency Saloon, can make it easier to defend against the xenomorphs.
- If the players contact the Lakota before the attack on the encampment, they can warn them about the xenomorphs.
- Sending a message to Fort Providence calls in the cavalry. The players still need to survive one night of attacks, but relief will be on the way (of course, it is an open question as to whether or not that relief will be capable of stopping the xenomorphs).

High Noon

Depending on your xenomorphs, this attack might happen at midnight instead – but either way, Hell's coming to Bent River.

This is the big battle scene for the adventure. If it were a movie, this is where you would blow your special effects budget. Review both the xenomorphs' tactics and the preparations made by your players. Give the players a few 'wins.' If they have set up a trap that drops a monster into the whiskey-filled basement of the Bent River Saloon, then have a xenomorph walk into it. If their primary tactic involves funnelling the xenomorphs into a kill zone on Main Street, then let the bad guys fall for it – the xenomorphs are absurdly powerful compared to the players, so you can afford to have some of them perish. The rest still pose an overwhelming threat to Bent River.

For Hunters or Perfect Organisms, this is likely a straight combat scene. The bad guys show up and cause carnage, either by invisibly stalking and executing defenders, or by slaughtering any resistance and carrying seriously wounded survivors back to their Queen.

For Pod Things or Martians, think about who has been subverted by the xenomorphs. Do they seize control of leaders like Deputy Fidlar, or Ward, or someone less obvious like Deborah Smamson? Hold these traitors in reserve for as long as possible, to make the moment of revelation more dramatic.

Defeating the Aliens

If you are running *Cowboys vs Xenomorphs* as a one-shot, then just defending the town might be enough to win. The United States Cavalry turns up the next day and, aided by the players, sweep into the Brown Hills and storm the enemy stronghold, bugles blowing wildly and Old Glory fluttering overhead. If your players need a satisfying conclusion, then remind them that there is a dam at the far end of Snake Gulch and the xenomorphs ship's engines are damaged and leaking heat. Dropping a river on top of a damaged engine puts an end to the alien threat with a tremendous boom. Alternatively, the players could counterattack, sneak into the xenomorph ship and blow it up with a well-placed trail of gunpowder leading to the engine room…

Alternatively, *Cowboys vs Xenomorphs* can be the start of an alternate-history Western campaign. The players saved Bent River, but what if Sioux City is now crawling with Perfect Organisms? What if the Hunters return in greater numbers? What if Sioux City is now crawling with Perfect Organisms and Hunters turn up to catch humanity in a crossfire? Abraham Lincoln could already be a Pod Duplicate, and the drunkest gambler in the Riverboat's Rest would not bet against the odds of anything coming from Mars!

Or maybe the xenomorphs were defeated, leaving the players in control of a starship. As the wide open spaces of the Old West get fenced in and settled, restless souls like the players might turn their eyes to the heavens and an entirely new frontier…

Xenomorphology

We have provided several xenomorph species for the referee to choose from in this adventure, ensuring he can run it multiple times, tailored to specific groups and their playing styles. We have not provided artwork for any of them, so the referee can describe their physical make up as he sees fit, but all are based on science-fiction tropes that any Traveller player will be readily familiar with.

Each xenomorph species has a slightly different approach to what they want (death to all humans, more or less), which will subtly influence the way players can complete the adventure. It may come down to a stand up fight in the alien's lair, a desperate last defence of Bent River, an appeal to the aliens' honour, a subtle infiltration of the aliens' schemes or, knowing players, something we could not possibly conceive of!

The Perfect Organism

These xenomorphs have been described as the perfect organism. Extremely tough and able to survive in the harshest environments, they reproduce by impregnating a living host, have acid for blood, and are utterly lethal in close combat – you get the idea.

They have no ranged weapons, so as long as the players are able to keep plenty of distance and have a clear line of sight, they will do well. However, as soon as the xenomorphs move into areas with reduced visibility, such as the ravines or Bent Water itself, the advantage swings back towards them. Just one can easily tear apart even a veteran gunslinger in close combat, and their acidic blood can be as deadly as their claws.

These xenomorphs managed to gain entry to another species' ship and infected the crew, causing it to crash. Emerging from the wreckage, they have created a lair and now have an entire world of hosts to start spreading. If they are not stopped now, while their numbers are low, it could be the doom of the entire planet.

Tactics

The main goal for the xenomorphs is to eliminate any resistance and capture (not kill) as many defenceless living hosts as possible, be they townsfolk, horses or cattle. Their primary concern is the Queen, who will not leave the xenomorph lair. It is her purpose to lay as many eggs as possible (she can easily lay 40 or more in a day), which hatch into huggers.

These can impregnate living hosts who, after 1d6 days, will be ripped apart by an immature warrior tearing its way free from the inside. 1d6 days after that, the warrior will no longer be immature…

Around 30-40 warriors survived the crash of the spaceship, along with the Queen and 4 royal bodyguards. However, by targeting first miners and prospectors in the Brown Hills, then Indians from the nearby Lakota tribe, they will quickly build their numbers. By the time the xenomorphs and citizens of Bent River discover one another, there will be quite an army.

As soon as they become aware of the existence of Bent River, they start colonising it. To do this, they first scout out the town and identify a safe hiding place within it – the little-used bank is ideal. A pack of warriors then travel to the town, carrying with them a clutch of eggs. The warriors then capture some likely victims, trap them in the bank, and hatch more warriors. Once their numbers grow enough to attack the town openly, they drag their victims back to the lair where their eternally-fecund queen will have laid more eggs to 'process' these fresh hosts.

Xenomorphs

There are a number of sub-species of the Perfect Organism, including the basic warrior, which is what the players will see the most of, the huggers which impregnate hosts, royal bodyguards, and the Queen herself.

All Perfect Organisms have the following special rules;

Fast Metabolism: +2 Initiative
Hardy: Can survive for End + 1d6 minutes in a vacuum or while submersed
Super Agile: Can climb any rough surface, be it tree or ceiling, as if it were normal ground – it will not be slowed at all.
Acid for Blood: If a xenomorph is wounded by a slug or melee weapon, it will spray acidic blood over everyone within Personal or Close range. The damage dealt will be equal to half that sustained by the xenomorph in the attack. A character declaring a Dodge may make a Dex check to reduce the damage to a quarter of that taken by the xenomorph.

The acid will keep burning in subsequent rounds, doing 1d6 less damage in each round. If the character was wearing armour when splashed by the blood, he may negate this subsequent damage by removing the armour (which will then be rendered useless). If a character suffers more than 10 points of damage while wearing armour (after the armour's protection has been accounted for), then the armour will be ruined in the attack and become irreparable.

Name	Hugger	**STR 6**	**DEX 12**	**END 4**	**INT 1**	**EDU -**	**SOC -**
Age ?							
Skills	Athletics (co-ordination) 3, Melee (natural weapons) 3, Recon 3, Stealth 3						
Equipment	Claws (1d6)						

Name	Immature Warrior	**STR 4**	**DEX 12**	**END 4**	**INT 6**	**EDU -**	**SOC -**
Age ?							
Skills	Athletics (co-ordination) 1, Melee (natural weapons) 1, Recon 1, Stealth 3						
Equipment	Bite (1d6)						

Name	Warrior	**STR 12**	**DEX 12**	**END 9**	**INT 6**	**EDU -**	**SOC -**
Age ?							
Skills	Athletics (co-ordination) 2, Melee (natural weapons) 4, Recon 2, Stealth 2						
Equipment	Armoured Skin (2), Claws (4d6)						

Name	Royal Bodyguard	**STR 14**	**DEX 10**	**END 10**	**INT 6**	**EDU -**	**SOC -**
Age ?							
Skills	Athletics (co-ordination) 2, Melee (natural weapons) 5, Recon 2, Stealth 2						
Equipment	Armoured Skin (4), Claws (4d6)						

Name	Queen	**STR 18**	**DEX 9**	**END 24**	**INT 8**	**EDU -**	**SOC -**
Age ?							
Skills	Athletics (co-ordination) 2, Melee (natural weapons) 5, Recon 3, Stealth 1						
Equipment	Armoured Skin (6), Claws (4d6), Tail (5d6)						

The Hunters

These xenomorphs are from a highly advanced society that values an individual's prowess to track, hunt and kill dangerous prey. They have a variety of technological devices to aid them in this, including the ability to turn invisible. Again, you get the idea.

These xenomorphs are about as intelligent as humans, but they are so far in advance of the 19th Century Wild West, they might as well be using magic. They do not have any weapons that are useful at very long ranges, so the players may find they can build an advantage there. Close up, however, and the advantage swings solidly to the xenomorphs. They are physically more powerful than humans and are armed with lethal energy weapons.

The only real advantage the players have, if they have a chance to figure it out, is that the Hunters have a deep-rooted sense of honour when it comes to hunting (which is how they view all combat), which forbids them to attack anyone who is not armed.

A malfunction caused their craft to crash into the Brown Hills, and they are busy trying to repair it. However, the presence of armed humans has stalled the repairs as the Hunters begin vying with one another for the honour of hunting the greatest warriors the humans have to offer. Enter the players…

Organisms vs...

For added carnage, you can have two breeds of xenomorph in your game. The best way to handle this is to have a clutch of xenomorph eggs in storage in the ship's hold. The ship crashed when one of the monsters got loose. The crew have the situation back under control now, but the players could accidentally free a hugger… and where there's one Perfect Organism, more soon follow. This builds up to a three-way fight in Bent River.

Tactics

The main goal for these xenomorphs is to find the greatest prey in the area, kill it, and preserve its skull as a trophy. On their first patrols, they encountered cougars and coyotes, and found them… lacking in sport. However, once they found miners and prospectors willing to shoot at anything suspicious, their interest was caught. The Lakota Indians, in particular, will give them a spirited, if rather short-lived hunt.

They could repair their ship with just a day or two's more work, but are only likely to leave once they have wiped out all challenges in the area. Alternatively, it is just possible that a hero who fights with honour (their version of it) might impress them enough to

spare his life and return home with tales of a great hunt. The players might call this a victory, as they are not to know that this very action will put Earth on the galactic map for the Hunters, who will return every few years for more great prey.

Though their leader was killed, six Hunters survived the crash, all eager to prove they are the best choice for a new leader by engaging in the Hunt.

Xenomorphs

Each Hunter has a favoured weapon and, while they may carry several at any one time, will usually default to their best. This is one way the players may be able to tell them apart.

All Hunters have access to the following weapons and equipment. Players may well be able to get their hands on some of it if they manage to kill a hunter, but being able to use such technologically advanced items will be a very different matter;

Plasmathrower: An automated device that sits on the left shoulder of a Hunter, the plasmathrower automatically points at whatever the Hunter is looking at. It fires bolts of white-hot plasma that can burn through almost any protection available in the 19th Century.

Spear: A retractable device, at rest this weapon looks like a simple metal rod around 50 cm long. Upon activation, it springs out at both ends to form a 2m long spear.

Wrist Blades: A favourite of some Hunters, these blades are usually worn on the back of one gauntlet, though some Hunters favour using them in pairs. Usually retracted back across the hand, the two or three blades can spring out instantly to give the Hunter an extremely nasty weapon.

Hunter Armour: Provides Protection 8. The armour also includes an integrated medikit, multi-spectrum vision display (treat as clear vision regardless of lighting or cover), and an external voice recorder.

Hunter armour also includes an advanced light-bending invisibility system. This makes the Hunter practically invisible to normal vision, granting it a +4 DM to all Stealth tests. This cloaking will be automatically dropped during close combat (as soon as the Hunter attacks) and will be permanently disrupted by immersion in water.

The aiming systems of Hunter armour are tied directly into the plasmathrower. A red laser mark is apparent upon whatever the Hunter is aiming at, but grants a +2 DM to hit the target.

Note: This armour is too big for a human!

The Martians

These are your classic grey-skinned (or green-skinned), big-headed, flying-saucer aliens. They are physically unimpressive, but make it up for it with their advanced technology and psionic powers.

There are two ways to play these Martians – for a serious game, they are dispassionate scientists, here to harvest vitally needed genetic material to revive their dying race. For a comedy game, play them as Martian invaders with ray guns who just want to blow things up. In either case, they landed their ship instead of crashing it, although its space-warp engines need a few days to recharge before they can leave.

Their primary weapon is a hand-held energy blaster. They also have portable force-field generators. These gadgets are about the size of a toolbox. To use them, simply place them on the ground and press a control; the generator then projects a bubble of nigh-impenetrable energy. The force-fields block physical projectiles like bullets, but allows energy to pass through. A second setting creates an energy-proof opaque shield. The force field provides armour Protection 20.

The Martians travel by means of skimmers – these are silver discs that can fly at high speed, controlled by telepathy. The discs come in one-man (or one-Martian) and six-man configurations.

All Martians are psychic. They all have Telepathy, and use it to interrogate their prisoners and communicate with one another. They also have two special telepathic powers called Freeze

Weapon	Range	Damage	Auto	Recoil	Mass	Magazine	Notes
Plasmathrower	Ranged (shotgun)	6d6	No	1	2 kg	-	
Spear	Melee (blades)	4d6	No	0	6 kg	-	Can be thrown
Wrist Blades	Melee (blades)	2d6	No	0	2 kg	-	

Name	Hunter	**STR 14**	**DEX 9**	**END 12**	**INT 8**	**EDU 6**	**SOC -**
Age ?							
Skills	Athletics (co-ordination) 3, Gun Combat (energy) 2, Gun Combat (slug) 2, Investigate 1, Medic 1, Melee (blade) 2, Recon 2, Sensors 2, Stealth 1, Survival 1						
Equipment	Hunter Armour (8), Plasmathrower, Spear, Wristblades						

New Telepathic Powers

Freeze: The telepath seizes control of the victim's nervous system, paralysing them. If the check is successful, the victim is unable to move for 1-6 hours. An external stimulus can free the victim (a punch, a mild electronic shock, a slap), but it is impossible to break oneself out of a freeze.
Telepathy, Psionic Strength, Hard (-4), 1-6 Hours. Costs 4+Range.

Control: The telepath imprints a post-hypnotic suggestion into the target's mind. This command can be no more than a few words long (*'obey everything I say'* is a classic, as is '*kill the president*'). The Effect of the check determines how intense the suggestion is, and how difficult it is to resist with an Int + Leadership test. A character must make a fresh roll to resist every round.

Effect	Difficulty
0-1	Easy (+2)
2-3	Average (+0)
4-5	Difficult (-2)
6+	Very Difficult (-4)

Telepathy, Psionic Strength, Difficult (-2), 1-6 Days. Costs 4+Range.

and Control (see sidebar). Optionally, they might be uniquely vulnerable to telepathic feedback of some sort (maybe they cannot cope with a particular emotion, or cannot read your mind if you're drunk).

Tactics

Bent River is their laboratory. They intend to isolate the town, then conduct bizarre experiments on their captives. The first step is to cut off all communication. The Martians take telepathic control of key figures in and around town, like Deputy Fidlar and Glen McGarry. They also station Martians at key approaches, like the trail east to Fort Providence.

Once the townsfolk are trapped, the aliens begin experimenting on them. They abduct one or two characters every night using Freeze and dissect them, hoping to find the genetic key to revitalise their species. If they fail to find it in Bent River, they will move on to another isolated settlement and try again. They are nothing if not patient.

Xenomorphs

All Martians are clones and have exactly the same characteristics.

Force Field Generator: Takes one round to activate or deactivate, and is immobile when in operation. Provides Protection 20 against bullets and other physical projectiles. It has a maximum radius of 1 metre.

Skimmer: A one or six-person flying device. They are controlled using the Telepathy skill.

Blaster Ray Gun
Classic 50's sci-fi ray gun, complete with gem tipped barrel.

Pod Things

In their natural form, Pod Things look like six-foot-long slimy cucumber-worms, like something you would see in the deep ocean, or in the worst opium-nightmare courtesy of Mr. Ho's dragon pipe. The sessile form of the Pod Things is adapted for life on their dying home world, not on Earth.

This species is very adaptable. With a genetic sample, they can turn themselves into almost perfect Duplicates of native lifeforms. They came to Earth to conquer and colonise it – billions more slumber in the dark reaches of space, waiting patiently for the signal telling them to come to their new home. Pod Thing technology is all stolen from other races who were unlucky enough to encounter these horrific parasites.

Pod Things come in three forms.

Sessiles: Their natural form. These vegetable monsters can only move slowly, but can shoot out a long sticky tendril to grapple nearby enemies. If the sessile drags a foe into its sticky orifice by winning a Str + Melee (unarmed) contest in the round after making a tendril attack, it takes a genetic sample and can then turn itself into a Pod Duplicate.

Weapon	Range	Damage	Auto	Recoil	Mass	Magazine	Notes
Blaster Ray Gun	Ranged (rifle)	4d6	No	0	0.5 kg	-	

Name	Martian	STR 4	DEX 10	END 7	INT 11	EDU 14	PSI 12
Age ?							
Skills	Gun Combat (energy rifle) 2, Life Science 4, Medic 4, Melee 0, Recon 1, Stealth 2, Telepathy 4						
Equipment	Alien Robes (4), Blaster Ray Gun, Force Field Projector						

Sessiles can also spit potent acid. This acid spit rapidly breaks down dead flesh, allowing the sessile to dispose of inconvenient corpses.

Weapon	Range	Damage	Auto	Recoil
Tendril	Melee (unarmed)	1d6	No	0
Acid Spit	Ranged (thrown)	4d6	No	0

Drones are the foot soldiers and servants of the sessiles. They look like five-foot-tall green insects, but are actually closer to vegetables. They are unintelligent and can only act when directed using pheromones secreted by a sessile or pod duplicate. Drones can spit a weaker form of acid (dealing 2d6 damage instead of 4d6), and can use salvaged firearms and other equipment.

Duplicates are the 'human' form of the sessiles. They look like the humans they replaced, but there are a few subtle differences. They are slightly bigger, for one thing, and need regular exposure to sunlight as they are photosynthetic. They act human, but may appear unemotional or 'off,' requiring Deception rolls to fool others.

Duplicates use the characteristics of the original, with the listed changes.

Playing Duplicates

If a player gets grabbed by a Pod Thing and turned into a Duplicate, consider letting the player play the alien monster. Take the player aside and describe how he is now an alien invader, with the mission of replacing as many people as possible with more Pod Duplicates. Players love the chance to wear a black hat!

Name	Pod Sessile	**STR 10**	**DEX 6**	**END 12**	**INT 10**	**EDU 10**	**SOC -**
Age ?							
Skills	Athletics (throw) 2, Melee (unarmed) 3, Recon 1, Stealth 1						

Name	Pod Drone	**STR 6**	**DEX 6**	**END 6**	**INT 0**	**EDU 0**	**SOC -**
Age ?							
Skills	Athletics (throw) 1, Melee (unarmed) 1, Recon 2, Stealth 1						

Name	Pod Duplicate	**STR +2**	**DEX +0**	**END +2**	**INT 10**	**EDU -1**	**SOC -**
Age ?							
Skills	Add Deception 1						

The Main Cast

It is suggested that, at least for the first time you run Cowboys vs. Xenomorphs, you use the pre-generated characters detailed in this chapter, as they have suitable skills to (maybe) survive the adventure! However, you are welcome to generate brand new characters using the Desperado career presented afterwards.

The players are a gang very much on the wrong side of the law. A stagecoach heist went dreadfully wrong (a few deaths were involved), and the players faced no choice but to flee as far into the frontier as they could, hoping to find a small settlement where they could lay low for a while. When they arrive, Bent River will seem ideal…

Each character has a small write-up which should be given to the player, providing a few basic traits with which to roleplay. The idea here is not to straitjacket the players with tightly defined personalities but to kick off a group dynamic, which is often useful in a one-off adventure.

The next few pages feature character sheets, which can simply be printed off and handed to each player. The players have enough ammunition to reload each weapon 1d6 times (have them roll before the adventure starts).

Cyrus Finch

Many people presume Cyrus is the leader of the gang, as he is loud, boastful, and enjoys being the centre of attention. He has what might be called *presence*. He is prone to acting tough and is happy to throw his weight around, especially when his friends are close by. However, Cyrus himself is very much aware that this is all bravado, and his secret fear is that, when the chips are down and the situation desperate, he will fall to pieces.

Cole Remmington

Cole enjoys the respect of the rest of the gang, as he is utterly dependable. Time and again, he has risked his life to save another gang member, and they are all aware that Cole will put his friends before anything else. They often look to him for leadership (especially in light of Cyrus' bravado) but this is something Cole does not want the responsibility of. Being second-in-command and advising a course of action is just fine with him, but he does not want to be a leader.

Candice Harper

The daughter of a well-respected politician, Candice rebelled against her family and fell into bad company. Her young daughter was shot and killed in a dispute between street gangs and, since then, Candice has tried to shut herself off from the rest of the world. She is by no means a bad person, but will not take hassle from anyone. Her greatest weakness is that she finds it utterly impossible to refuse a child in distress.

Milly Faire

Milly Faire had the good looks and intelligence to be pretty much anything she wanted – actress, singer, socialite. Instead, she developed a passion for guns at an early age, which she has pursued her whole life. Milly is utterly lethal with a rifle or pistol in her hands, and she knows it. She loves nothing better than to have a man underestimate her, and then blowing him away. Contrary to the rest of the gang, Milly favours fine clothes, which are not always practical in gang life.

Jeb Tucket

Born on the frontier, Jeb has grown old before his time, and is often nicknamed Granddad. He has an opinion on absolutely everything and will relate it whether it is wanted or not – but always in as few words as possible. His appearance could charitably be called grizzled.

Kip Copeland

The youngest member of the gang, Kip feels he has everything to prove. A bad experience in his childhood has left him with a serious mean streak when it comes to native Indians (he is what you might called prejudiced), and it is his fond wish to test his skills with a knife against those of a brave. Perpetually excited, Kip can often be overeager in whatever endeavour the gang is pursuing, but his knife work has proved handy in the past.

Name: CYRUS FINCH

Age: 28 **Race:** HUMAN

Homeworld: EARTH **Racial Traits:**

Characteristics

Strength	10	Intellect	6
Mod		Mod	
Dexterity	7	Education	4
Mod		Mod	
Endurance	8	Social	7
Mod		Mod	

Armour

Type: HEAVY COAT

Rating: 1

Special Notes:

Skills

Admin		Drive		Language		Seafarer	
Advocate		Drive		Language		Seafarer	
Animals	(RIDING) 2	Engineer		Leadership		Sensors	
Animals		Engineer		Life Sciences		Social Sciences	
Athletics	(CO ORDINATION) 2	Explosives		Life Sciences		Social Sciences	
Athletics		Flyer		Mechanic		Space Sciences	
Athletics		Flyer		Medic		Space Sciences	
Art		Gambler	1	Melee	(UNARMED) 2	Stealth	
Art		Gunner		Melee		Steward	
Astrogation		Gunner		Navigation		Streetwise	
Battle Dress		Gun Combat	(SHOTGUN) 1	Persuade	2	Survival	
Broker		Gun Combat	(SLUG PISTOL) 1	Pilot		Tactics	
Carouse	2	Gun Combat		Pilot		Tactics	
Comms		Heavy Weapons		Physical Sciences		Trade	
Computers		Heavy Weapons		Physical Sciences		Trade	
Deception		Investigate		Recon		Vacc Suit	
Diplomat		Jack of all Trades		Remote Operations		Zero-G	

Finances

Pension

Debt

Cash on Hand: $350

Monthly Ship Payment

Equipment

Equipment	Mass
BEDROLL	
BLANKET	
COLT (BUNTLINE)	
COLT (STAGECOACH)	
SHOTGUN	
HEAVY COAT	
LIGHT HORSE	

Total Mass =

Weapons

Weapon	Attack	Damage	P	C	S	M	L	VL	D	Notes
			Range Modifiers							

Career History

Career	Branch	Events	Rank	Title

Allies, Contacts, Enemies, Rivals

TRAVELLER

Character Sheet

Name: COLE REMINGTON

Age: 29 **Race:** HUMAN

Homeworld: EARTH **Racial Traits:**

Characteristics

Strength	9	Intellect	8
Mod		Mod	
Dexterity	8	Education	6
Mod		Mod	
Endurance	7	Social	7
Mod		Mod	

Armour

Type:

Rating

Special Notes

Skills

Admin		Drive		Language		Seafarer	
Advocate		Drive		Language		Seafarer	
Animals	(RIDING) 1	Engineer		Leadership	1	Sensors	
Animals		Engineer		Life Sciences		Social Sciences	
Athletics	(CO ORDINATION) 1	Explosives		Life Sciences		Social Sciences	
Athletics		Flyer		Mechanic		Space Sciences	
Athletics		Flyer		Medic	1	Space Sciences	
Art		Gambler		Melee	0	Stealth	
Art		Gunner		Melee		Steward	
Astrogation		Gunner		Navigation		Streetwise	
Battle Dress		Gun Combat	(SLUG PISTOL) 2	Persuade		Survival	1
Broker		Gun Combat		Pilot		Tactics	
Carouse		Gun Combat		Pilot		Tactics	
Comms		Heavy Weapons		Physical Sciences		Trade	
Computers		Heavy Weapons		Physical Sciences		Trade	
Deception		Investigate	1	Recon		Vacc Suit	
Diplomat		Jack of all Trades	1	Remote Operations		Zero-G	

Finances

Pension

Debt

Cash on Hand

$520

Monthly Ship Payment

Equipment

Equipment	Mass
BEDROLL	
BLANKET	
COLT (SHOPKEEPER)	
LIGHT HORSE	
OIL LAMP	
ROPE	

Total Mass =

Weapons

Weapon	Attack	Damage	P	C	S	M	L	VL	D	Notes

Range Modifiers

Career History

Career	Branch	Events	Rank	Title

Allies, Contacts, Enemies, Rivals

TRAVELLER

Character Sheet

Name: CANDICE HARPER

Age: 26 **Race:** HUMAN

Homeworld: EARTH **Racial Traits:**

Characteristics

Strength	6	Intellect	7
Mod		Mod	
Dexterity	9	Education	7
Mod		Mod	
Endurance	7	Social	6
Mod		Mod	

Armour

Type:

Rating

Special Notes

Skills

Admin		Drive		Language		Seafarer	
Advocate		Drive		Language		Seafarer	
Animals	(RIDING) 1	Engineer		Leadership		Sensors	
Animals		Engineer		Life Sciences		Social Sciences	
Athletics	0	Explosives		Life Sciences		Social Sciences	
Athletics		Flyer		Mechanic		Space Sciences	
Athletics		Flyer		Medic		Space Sciences	
Art		Gambler		Melee		Stealth	1
Art		Gunner		Melee		Steward	
Astrogation		Gunner		Navigation		Streetwise	2
Battle Dress		Gun Combat	(SLUG PISTOL) 1	Persuade		Survival	
Broker		Gun Combat		Pilot		Tactics	
Carouse	2	Gun Combat		Pilot		Tactics	
Comms		Heavy Weapons		Physical Sciences		Trade	
Computers		Heavy Weapons		Physical Sciences		Trade	
Deception	2	Investigate		Recon	2	Vacc Suit	
Diplomat		Jack of all Trades		Remote Operations		Zero-G	

Finances

Pension

Debt

Cash on Hand

$210

Monthly Ship Payment

Equipment

Equipment	Mass
BEDROLL	
BLANKET	
LIGHT HORSE	
SLOCUM (POCKET ARM)	

Total Mass =

Weapons

Weapon	Attack	Damage	P	C	S	M	L	VL	D	Notes
			Range Modifiers							

Career History

Career	Branch	Events	Rank	Title

Allies, Contacts, Enemies, Rivals

TRAVELLER

Character Sheet

Name: MILLY FAIRE

Age: 19 **Race:** HUMAN

Homeworld: EARTH **Racial Traits:**

Characteristics

Strength	5	Intellect	6
Mod		Mod	
Dexterity	12	Education	5
Mod		Mod	
Endurance	6	Social	9
Mod		Mod	

Armour

Type:

Rating

Special Notes

Skills

Admin		Drive		Language		Seafarer	
Advocate		Drive		Language		Seafarer	
Animals	0	Engineer		Leadership		Sensors	
Animals		Engineer		Life Sciences		Social Sciences	
Athletics	(CO ORDINATION) 2	Explosives	0	Life Sciences		Social Sciences	
Athletics		Flyer		Mechanic		Space Sciences	
Athletics		Flyer		Medic		Space Sciences	
Art		Gambler		Melee		Stealth	
Art		Gunner		Melee		Steward	
Astrogation		Gunner		Navigation		Streetwise	
Battle Dress		Gun Combat	(SHOTGUN) 1	Persuade	2	Survival	0
Broker		Gun Combat	(SLUG PISTOL) 2	Pilot		Tactics	
Carouse	1	Gun Combat	(SLUG RIFLE) 2	Pilot		Tactics	
Comms		Heavy Weapons		Physical Sciences		Trade	
Computers		Heavy Weapons		Physical Sciences		Trade	
Deception		Investigate		Recon	1	Vacc Suit	
Diplomat		Jack of all Trades		Remote Operations		Zero-G	

Finances

Pension

Debt

Cash on Hand

$350

Monthly Ship Payment

Equipment

Equipment	Mass
BEDROLL	
BLANKET	
2 COLT (LIGHTNINGS)	
FINE CLOTHES	
LIGHT HORSE	
SHARPS RIFLE	

Total Mass =

Weapons

Weapon	Attack	Damage	P	C	S	M	L	VL	D	Notes

Range Modifiers

Career History

Career	Branch	Events	Rank	Title

Allies, Contacts, Enemies, Rivals

TRAVELLER

Character Sheet

Name: JEB TUCKET

Age: 36 **Race:** HUMAN

Homeworld: EARTH **Racial Traits:**

Characteristics

Strength	7	Intellect	7
Mod		Mod	
Dexterity	7	Education	4
Mod		Mod	
Endurance	9	Social	5
Mod		Mod	

Armour

Type: HEAVY COAT

Rating: 1

Special Notes:

Skills

Admin		Drive		Language		Seafarer	
Advocate		Drive		Language		Seafarer	
Animals	(RIDING) 1	Engineer		Leadership		Sensors	
Animals		Engineer		Life Sciences		Social Sciences	(INDIAN TRIBES) 1
Athletics	(ENDURANCE) 1	Explosives	2	Life Sciences		Social Sciences	
Athletics		Flyer		Mechanic		Space Sciences	
Athletics		Flyer		Medic	0	Space Sciences	
Art		Gambler	1	Melee	(UNARMED) 1	Stealth	2
Art		Gunner		Melee		Steward	
Astrogation		Gunner		Navigation		Streetwise	
Battle Dress		Gun Combat	(SLUG RIFLE) 1	Persuade		Survival	3
Broker		Gun Combat		Pilot		Tactics	
Carouse		Gun Combat		Pilot		Tactics	
Comms		Heavy Weapons		Physical Sciences		Trade	
Computers		Heavy Weapons		Physical Sciences		Trade	
Deception		Investigate		Recon	2	Vacc Suit	
Diplomat		Jack of all Trades		Remote Operations		Zero-G	

Finances

Pension

Debt

Cash on Hand: ₮550

Monthly Ship Payment

Equipment

Equipment	Mass
BEDROLL	
BLANKET	
COMPASS	
HEAVY COAT	
HENRY RIFLE	
LIGHT HORSE	
REMINGTON (ARMY)	
3 STICKS OF DYNAMITE	

Total Mass =

Weapons

Weapon	Attack	Damage	P	C	S	M	L	VL	D	Notes
			Range Modifiers							

Career History

Career	Branch	Events	Rank	Title

Allies, Contacts, Enemies, Rivals

TRAVELLER

Character Sheet

Name: KIP COPELAND

Age: 17 Race: HUMAN

Homeworld: EARTH Racial Traits:

Characteristics

Strength	9	Intellect	6
Mod		Mod	
Dexterity	8	Education	4
Mod		Mod	
Endurance	7	Social	6
Mod		Mod	

Armour

Type:

Rating

Special Notes

Skills

Admin	Drive	Language	Seafarer
Advocate	Drive	Language	Seafarer
Animals (RIDING) 1	Engineer	Leadership	Sensors
Animals	Engineer	Life Sciences	Social Sciences
Athletics	Explosives	Life Sciences	Social Sciences
Athletics	Flyer	Mechanic	Space Sciences
Athletics	Flyer	Medic	Space Sciences
Art	Gambler	Melee (BLADES) 3	Stealth
Art	Gunner	Melee	Steward
Astrogation	Gunner	Navigation	Streetwise 1
Battle Dress	Gun Combat (SLUG PISTOL) 1	Persuade	Survival
Broker	Gun Combat	Pilot	Tactics
Carouse	Gun Combat	Pilot	Tactics
Comms	Heavy Weapons	Physical Sciences	Trade
Computers	Heavy Weapons	Physical Sciences	Trade
Deception	Investigate	Recon	Vacc Suit
Diplomat	Jack of all Trades	Remote Operations	Zero-G

Finances

Pension

Debt

Cash on Hand

$460

Monthly Ship Payment

Equipment

Equipment	Mass
BEDROLL	
BLANKET	
BOWIE KNIFE	
COLT (PEACEMAKER)	
LIGHT HORSE	
2 THROWING KNIVES	
TOBACCO	

Total Mass =

Weapons

Range Modifiers

Weapon	Attack	Damage	P	C	S	M	L	VL	D	Notes

Career History

Career	Branch	Events	Rank	Title

Allies, Contacts, Enemies, Rivals

TRAVELLER

Character Sheet

We recommend using the pre-generated characters for this adventure but if the players are determined to create their own, if one of them needs replacing (due to death, the adventure can be quite lethal), or if the referee is looking to build his own Wild West campaign, the Desperado career is a good starting point.

If a player is forced out of the career, we would suggest that is a good time to start the game, as he is probably on the run! If, on the other hand, a Life Event is called for, you can use the one in the *Traveller Core Rulebook* as is, with the exception of entry 12. Replace that with;

Unusual Event: Something weird. Roll 1d6;
1 – Artefact. You have a strange and unusual device from some culture (Indian? Mayan? Aztec?) that is not normally available.
2 – Dancing with Wolves. You spend time among an Indian tribe, learning their ways. Gain Social Sciences (Indian tribes) and a Contact among an Indian tribe.
3 – Amnesia. Something happened to you, but you don't know what it was.
4 – Contact with Government. You briefly come into contact with the high echelons of the United States government – a mayor of a major city, a Governor, perhaps, or maybe even the President…
5 – Romance. You have a whirlwind romance with a rich heiress, and spend time travelling and living on room service. Gain Carouse 1 and a +2 DM on any one Benefit roll.
6 – Contact with a Hero. You spend some time with a notable personality of the Wild West. Choose a suitable hero (for example Doc Holliday, Wild Bill Hickok, Calamity Jane, etc) and gain them as a Contact.

The Desperado

The desperado career covers a wide variety of archetypes from your favourite Westerns, from hero to villain, from gunslinger to pugilist, from lawman to murderer.

Qualification: None.

Assignments: Choose one of the following:

- **Bandit:** You were a petty thief or thug.
- **Cowboy:** You spent time working cattle, protecting vast herds from both thieves and predators.
- **Tenderfoot:** You come from a civilised background, but have been forced on the run..

	Bandit	Cowboy	Tenderfoot
Advancement	Int 6+	Str 6+	Dex 6+
Survival	Dex 7+	End 6+	Int 6+

Skills and Training:

	Personal Development	Service Skills	Advanced Education (Min Edu 10)
1	Carouse	Deception	Medic
2	+1 Dex	Recon	Investigate
3	+1 End	Athletics (any)	Persuade
4	Gambler	Gun Combat (any)	Advocate
5	Melee (any)	Animals (riding)	Science (any)
6	Gun Combat (any)	Survival	Diplomat
	Specialist: Bandit	**Specialist: Cowboy**	**Specialist: Tenderfoot**
1	Stealth	Gun Combat (any)	Persuade
2	Gun Combat (any)	Animals (any)	Deception
3	Animals (riding)	Athletics (any)	Streetwise
4	Melee (any)	Survival	Trade
5	Athletics (any)	Recon	Gambler
6	Deception	Navigation	Art (any)

Ranks and Skills

Rank	Bandit or Cowboy	Tenderfoot
0		
1	Survival 1	Streetwise 1
2		
3	Social Science (Indian tribes) 1	Melee (blade) 1
4		
5	Leadership 1	Survival 1
6		

Benefits

Roll	Cash ($)	Other Benefit
1	None	Contact
2	None	Jack of all Trades
3	500	Weapon
4	1,000	Ally
5	2,000	+1 Edu
6	3,000	Gain a Horse
7	4,000	Gain an Excellent Horse

Mishap

2d66	Mishap
2	Severely injured. Roll twice on the Injury table and take the lower result.
3	Arrested. Lose one Benefit roll.
4	Betrayed by a friend. One of your Contacts or Allies betrays you, ending your career, becoming a Rival or Enemy. If you have no Contacts or Allies, you are betrayed by someone you never saw coming and still gain a Rival or Enemy.
5	You inadvertently cause a conflict between a town or settlers and an Indian tribe. Gain a Rival and Diplomat 1.
6	A Rival attempts to end your life. Roll Endurance 8+ or Gun Combat 9+. If you fail, roll on the Injury table.
7	A job goes wrong, forcing you to flee to another state. Gain one of Deception 1, animals (riding) 1, Gun Combat (any) 1, or Streetwise 1.
8	A natural disaster, Indian raid or war strikes. Roll Stealth 8+ or Deception 8+ to escape unhurt. If you fail, roll on the Injury table.
9	A job goes wrong, leaving you stranded in the wilderness. Gain Survival 1 or Athletics (co-ordination or endurance) 1. By the time you get back to civilisation, your old gang has moved on.
10	You have no idea what happened to you – you woke up in the middle of the wilderness, next to a dead horse.
11	A lawman or bounty hunter forces you to flee and vows to hunt you down. Gain an Enemy.
12	Injured. Roll on the Injury table

Events

D66	Event
11	Disaster! Roll on the Mishap table, but you are not ejected from this career.
12	You are arrested and charged. You can choose to defend yourself or hire a lawyer. If you defend yourself, roll Advocate 8+. If you succeed, the charges are dropped. If you fail, lose one Benefit roll and gain an Enemy. If you hire a lawyer, lose a Benefit and gain the lawyer as a Contact.
13	Life Event. Roll on the Life Events table.
14	You make friends as you travel. Gain a Contact.
15	The population of a small town looks on as a corrupt sheriff and his cohorts beat you bloody. Roll on the Injury table and gain the population of the town as an Enemy. However, if it happened a long time before you start adventuring, they may no longer recognise you…
16	You are attacked by bandits. Roll Gun Combat 8+ or Stealth 8+ to escape. If you fail, roll on the Injury table.
21	You have the opportunity to take part in a minor heist. If you refuse, nothing happens. If you accept, roll Streetwise 8+ or Stealth 8+. Succeed, and you gain an extra Benefit roll. Fail, and you must roll on the Mishap table.
22	You pick up a few useful skills here and there. Gain Jack of all Trades 1.
23	A lawman wants to use you as an informant. If you accept, you gain a Contact and an extra Benefit roll each term while you remain an informant. You cease being an informant when you leave this career or when you choose to stop. Roll 1d6 each term you stay an informant; on a 1, you are found out and attacked. Roll on the Injury table.
24	You spend time in the wilderness. Gain Survival 1, Animals (any) 1 or Survival 1.
25	Another passenger on a stagecoach is a gambler, who challenges you to a game. Unfortunately, he's a con artist. Lose one Benefit roll and gain him as a Rival.
26	You are captured by Indians. Roll 1d6. 1-2: You are tortured. Lose 2 Strength; 3-4: Lose 1 Strength; 5-6: Gain one of the other prisoners as a Contact.
31	You take another drifter under your wing. Protecting the young waif makes life more difficult for you; you have a –1 DM to your Survival checks. Each term you protect the waif, roll 1d6. On a 6, the waif learns to survive alone; gain an Ally and any one skill.
32	You know who to talk to in towns and cities. Gain Streetwise 1, Broker 1, Persuade 1 or an Ally.
33	Life Event. Roll on the Life Events table.
34	You have the opportunity to serve as a volunteer in an settlement expedition in the frontier. Roll 1d6. 1. There's a horrible accident. Roll on the Injury table. 2. It turns out to be backbreaking labour in dangerous conditions. Lose one Endurance. 3. You gain nothing from the experience except a lingering hatred of settlers. 4. Gain a Contact among the settlers. 5. You learn something. Gain any Science (any) 1. 6. Something strange happens. Roll on the Unusual Event subtable of the Life Events table.

D66	Event
35	
36	You run afoul of an influential crime lord, landowner, Indian chief or other powerful individual. Gain an Enemy.
41	You hear some strange rumours about… (roll 1d6) 1. A ghost town, located deep in the wilderness. 2. A bandit gang looking for trustworthy and skilled gunmen and smugglers. 3. A corrupt landowner with strange, illegal tastes. 4. A mining town beset by bandits. 5. A secret military weapons cache in the wilderness. 6. An ancient Indian ruin that the government is covering up. You may investigate this rumour in the course of play.
42	You find work riding shotgun for a stagecoach company. Gain Recon 1, Investigate 1, or Gun Combat (any) 1.
43	A string of bad luck means you end up in dangerous territory. Gain an Enemy.
44	You have the opportunity to steal from a gang of bandits. If you take this opportunity, roll Stealth 8+ or Deception 8+. If you fail, roll on the Injury table. If you succeed, gain an Enemy and three Benefit rolls as you flee for your life.
45	You are stranded (or hiding) in a tiny settlement on the frontier. Gain any one of Survival 1, Streetwise 1, or Animals (any) 1.
46	Life Event. Roll on the Life Events table.
51	That weird animal keeps following you around, and you end up keeping it. Gain Animals (training) 1 and a pet.
52	You spot an obviously wealthy individual roaming around a frontier town. Roll 1d6, adding a +2 DM if you intend to rob him. 1-2: You befriend him and work as a guide. Gain a Contact. 3-4: Rich people don't wander around without bodyguards. You are attacked; roll on the Injury table. 5-6: You succeed in stealing some valuables. Gain three Benefit rolls or a Weapon worth up to $500. 7-8: You steal his identity papers. You may automatically qualify for the Noble (dilettante) career next term, but suffer a –4 DM to all Survival rolls made in that career.
53	You buy, steal, or win the best horse on the frontier. Choose any type of horse and give it three traits of your choosing.
54	You spend months living in a frontier town. Gain Broker 1, Animals (any) 1, Stealth 1 or 1d3 Contacts.
55	A Contact or Ally needs your help. If you refuse, lose that Contact or Ally. If you accept, roll 1d6 to determine what skill your friend needs. 1. Gun Combat 2. Streetwise 3. Stealth 4. Persuade 5. Deception 6. Choose a skill. Roll that skill. If you get an 8+, you successfully help your friend and get a +4 DM to your next Advancement roll. If you fail, you get a –4 DM to your next Advancement roll.
56	You become involved in a feud with a rival gang. Roll Gun Combat 8+ or Stealth 8+ to escape. If you fail, roll on the Injury table. If you succeed, gain an extra benefit roll.
61	
62	You drift in and out of criminal circles. Gain Streetwise 1 and a Rival.
63	You wander into the middle of a revolution, invasion or natural disaster. Gain Medic 1, Stealth 1, Gun Combat 1 or a Contact.
64	You've seen more of the frontier than most. Gain 1d3 Contacts and Jack of all Trades 1.
65	You make a useful contact. Gain a +4 DM to your next Advancement roll or a +4 DM to your next Qualification roll.
66	You survive an extremely dangerous situation. You are automatically promoted.

COWBOYS vs. XENOMORPHS

Both a gripping adventure and detailed sourcebook, Cowboys vs. Xenomorphs is your gateway to take Traveller into the Wild West!

Cowboys vs. Xenomorphs provides all the rules and new equipment you will need to run adventures in the Wild West, from the streets of New York to the unclaimed frontier. A complete frontier mining town is mapped and detailed, with fully-fleshed out characters ready for your players to ride in and start raising hell!

Beyond this, there is a complete adventure (written by Gareth Hanrahan) centred on the mining town, where the players will have to deal with a number of increasingly unusual situations until they finally stumble upon the truth - the Wild West is being invaded by xenomorphs! The referee has a choice of several xenomorph types, all based on familiar science-fiction tropes that are readily adapted to different styles of play, from the Perfect Organism to Classic Martians!

There are also six pre-generated characters to kick you off quickly into the adventure, along with a complete Desperado career for players wishing to create their own.

Cowboys vs. Xenomorphs is an exciting, thrilling, dark-and-deadly adventure in the Wild West, using the Traveller rules. The most fun you can have with a horse between your legs!