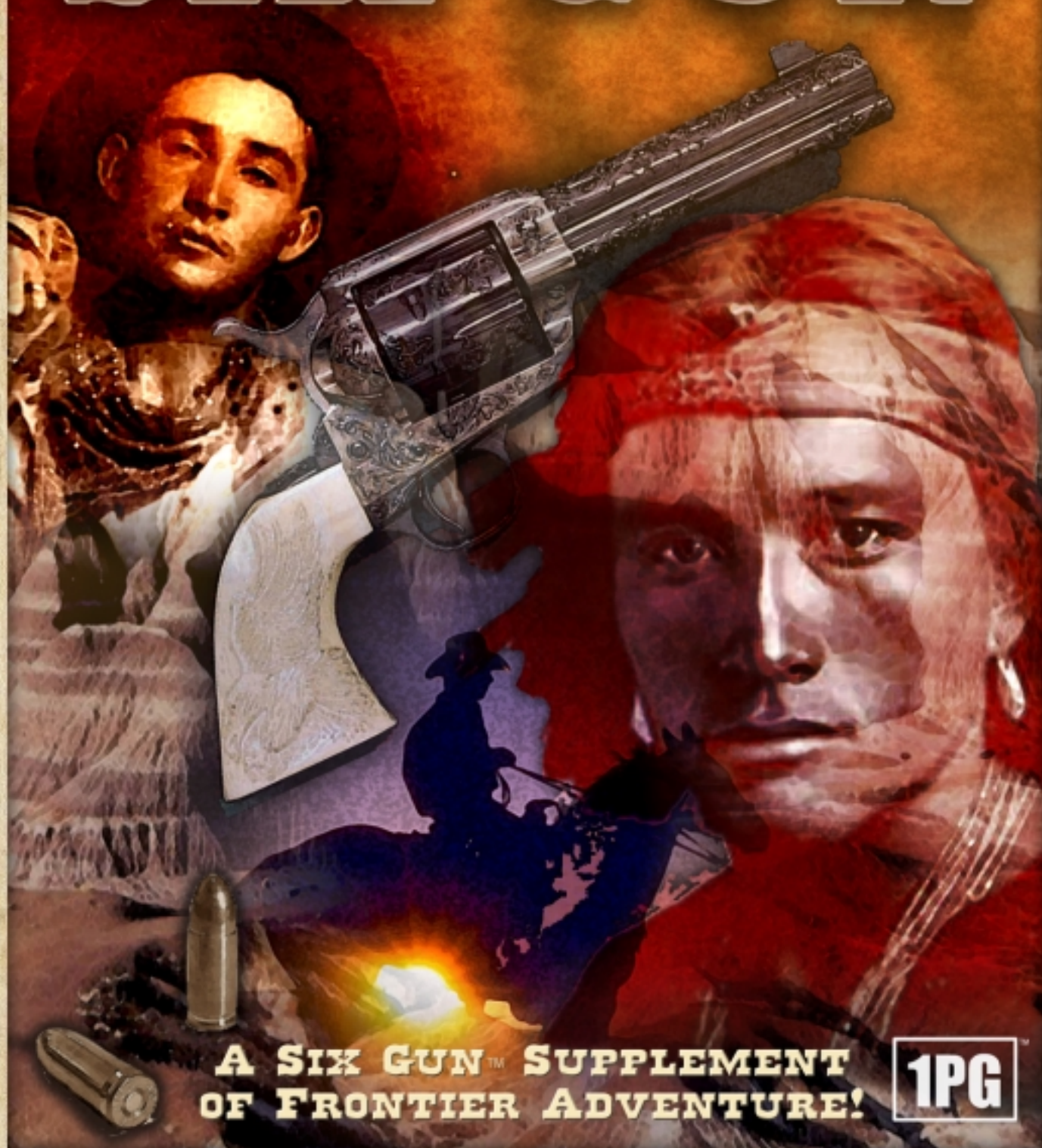


A FISTFUL OF SIX GUN



A SIX GUN™ SUPPLEMENT
OF FRONTIER ADVENTURE!

1PG

DOWNING • STUBBS • BRUNO

FISTFUL OF SIX GUN™

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

Six Gun Characters.....	3
Optional Rules and Mechanics	6
Indians	8
Other Adventures	9
Scenarios:	
The Fast and the Unfortunate	10
Treason	11
Have Gold, Will Travel	12
Injun Raid	13
Kidnapped!	14
The Dark Trail	15

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Thanks, Everybody!

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SIX GUN CHARACTERS

The character types which have a corresponding entry on the *Six Gun* Background and Style tables are unchanged from the default selections. However, they have been slightly expanded in *Fistful O' Six Gun* to deepen their character and to give them more genre flavor.

GUNSLINGER

The Wild West attracted all sorts of characters, both good and bad. Some came for the lure of cheap land. Some came for the gold. Others came for the lawlessness. The gunslinger is one of the latter. They are characterized by one simple thing - their proficiency with firearms. They roamed the west in search of fame, money and notoriety. Gunslingers are looked upon with equal measures of awe and distrust. Some people know of them as heroes while others consider them ruffians out to make their dishonest living through the barrel of a gun.

When creating a Gunslinger character, you do not roll on the Background Table. "Gunslinger" IS your background. You roll on the Style Table as normal.

Gunslingers receive +1 to their Shootin' skill as well as to their NOTORIETY. They also receive 1D3 bonus points of BLOOD to reflect the hard life they have had to live to hone their skills with the gun. Unfortunately, this fixation on firearms has left the character a little lacking in other areas. The character suffers a penalty of -1 to his initial skill points.

As compensation, the gunslinger gains some significant advantages in certain situations:

EYES IN THE BACK OF YOUR HEAD: Gunslingers must always be on the alert for someone trying to get the drop on them. Certain low-down scum and young guns trying to make a name for themselves like nothing better than to shoot a dude in the back at a poker game or while walking home at night with their girl rather than settle their disagreements like gentlemen with a proper showdown. The Gunslinger automatically imposes a -1 penalty on any Shootin' rolls against him if the opponent is firing first and they are not in a showdown. This is negated if the opponent also possesses this ability.

QUICKDRAW: Gunslingers make their fame from their tendency to duel others. Dime novels and sensational newspaper stories make heroes of those few men who survive by their lightning reflexes. When in a showdown situation, the character is treated as if their BRAINS score was one higher than it actually is for purposes of determining combat order. This ability is not negated if the opponent also possesses it.

WALKING TARGET: Being an hero isn't without its own dangers. The gunslinger must constantly be on guard to protect himself from other gunslingers as well as wannabe gunfighters who are determined to garner fame for themselves by eliminating opponents to increase their own prestige. If a gunslinger's NOTORIETY ever increases to more than three, they become slightly known and become a potential target. Any gunslinger

that they encounter past this point gains a +1 bonus to their Knowin' skill to identify the character and gain a rough idea of their skill with a gun. Opponents who are diametrically opposed to each other (usually good and evil), who have had a past or who have a equal or greater Shootin' skill are likely to call each other out for a showdown. The character is always free to decline, but automatically has their NOTORIETY reduced by 1 until they can successfully win a duel with another gunslinger.

DRIFTER

Immortalized by Clint Eastwood's *The Man with No Name* trilogy, the drifter has become a staple of the hard-bitten spaghetti western. These bitter men roam the land in search of some meaning for their existence, redemption from some past sin or simply a place to try to fit in. All can be characterized by their haunted and intimidating natures.

If anything, drifters also tend to have violent tempers that surface far more often than they would like. Some seethe quietly while others explode. Either way, someone usually ends up dead.

TEMPER TEMPER: Getting on the bad side of a drifter is a quick way to gain a visit from the local undertaker. The drifter character gains a +1 bonus to their Shootin' or Fightin' skill (player's choice) but only when provoked and only for the first round of combat. The player can spend a Character Point to continue this ability at the cost of one Character Point per two rounds of activation.

CONCEALED WEAPON: Drifters do not openly display any weapons that they might be carrying as most people tend to be distrustful of strangers in general and even more so for drifters. Many make use of large cloaks, blankets or dusters. Not only do concealed weapons minimize some of the leeriness of strangers but it is also a benefit for getting a shot or two in first and any advantage in a fight can't be all bad. If the player can make a successful CRAFTINESS check against their target, they automatically succeed in a sneak attack while hitting their target with the weapon of their choice. Assuming that the victim is still alive, they are then allowed to make a normal attack roll to see if they can get another attack in with the same weapon.

HAUNTED: Drifters have seen and done things in the past that would make even the most forgiving preacher blanch. It's hard for a man to come through such a life unscathed. Most drifters tend to drown their sorrows in a never-ending whiskey bottle while others become more introspective and withdrawn. They

suffer a -1 penalty to their PURDINESS attribute and gain either a +1 bonus to the Drinkin' or Knowin' skill (player's choice).

LAWMAN

The lawman of the Old West was often all that stood between the citizens of western states and lawlessness. They formed a bastion of order amongst chaos - a presence of government in the frontier. Many respected them for such a dangerous and thankless job. Which made things even worse when they failed to uphold their duties. A few were little more than outlaws themselves hiding behind and abusing the power of their authority. Some were zealots who held towns under their iron control and ruled them by their own twisted interpretations of law. Regardless of their moral standards, citizens expected the lawman to deal with all threats to their well being.

Because the people chose them, Lawmen bear great authority and responsibility. In game terms, they gain the following abilities:

TIN STAR: The lawman is an elected officer of the law. As a result, they are able to recruit deputies as well as organize posses. Lawmen gain a +1 bonus to their NOTORIETY in their hometown, county, state or nation depending on their affiliation. They also may deputize private citizens, which provides a great way to gather a posse together or quickly replace fallen PCs. However, they are also at the mercy of the citizenry or the organization into which they were hired. They are often expected to follow the whim of the citizens, defer to their superiors and obey commands. Insubordination or neglect of duty can lose them their jobs (and the NOTORIETY bonus).

RAPID FIRE: Lawmen are no stranger to the danger that their job involves. Very often, situations boil down to a single lawman outnumbered by multiple opponents. In order to gain the upper hand in these situations, the rapid fire technique of "fanning" the hammer of their pistols comes in handy. This is only usable with pistols and requires the shooter to beat the opponents die roll by two. Each increment over two (round down) results in an additional bullet striking a target. The shooter may designate how many bullets will hit each target within visual range. Damage is as normal for the weapon.

COMMANDING VOICE: Most lawmen prefer to resolve difficult situations without putting a bullet in anyone. Many do this by projecting authority into their voice. Some of the most legendary lawmen have been known to convince bands of banditos that they didn't want to come into town and face the consequences. The lawman gains a +2 bonus to their Talkin' skill but only when employing it in the duties of his profession.

MINER

Most westward bound miners had little actual knowledge of mining, trusting luck would find them the mother lode and make them rich. Those that did survive prospected with little success, but the wild tales of those who got lucky encouraged even more foolhardy and greedy souls to make the attempt.

FLY ON THE WALL: The grubby countenance of the miner was a very common sight. Most people avoided miners as they were mostly dirty and obsessed with their own dream of wealth. These aspects caused people to forget about them when secrets were discussed. A miner may add +1 to a BRAINS check when in the vicinity of confidential conferences.

THE JACKASS THAT WOULD NOT DIE: Any miner worth his salt would never be separated from his mule. It will run from fights or miraculously move out of the way of a bullet meant for it but can never be killed. The miner will always have transport.

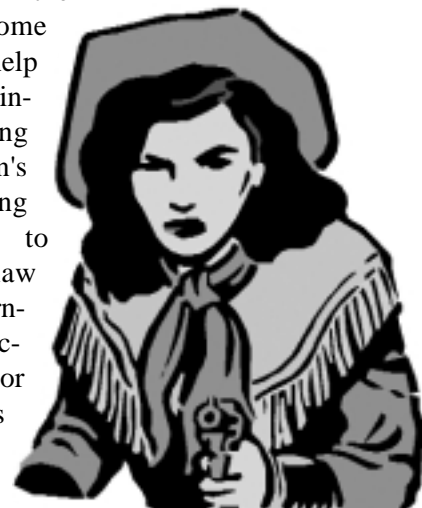
SECRET STASH: The miner knows when to squirrel away some extra money for a rainy day. He always has a small amount of valuables on him (gold dust, gold coins, iron ore, etc.) that he can use. If a miner ever finds himself in a situation where he doesn't have enough money to buy something, the player gets to roll 1D6 and multiply it by fifty. This is the number of dollars in valuable materials that he is able to come up with out of his stash. Rolling a 6 (critical failure) means that he gets the maximum money allowed but it depletes his stash entirely. He cannot regain the use of the stash until he squirrels away \$300 from any money that he gains through gameplay.

ENTERTAINER

Both despised because of their aversion to "real work" and desired as one of the few diversions in the west, the entertainer ranges the gamut from the basest brothel seductress to the highbrow actor determined to bring Shakespeare to the uncivilized west.

LIAR LIAR: The entertainer is adept at lying and detecting when others are attempting the same through their familiarity with body posture and facial nuances. The character gains a +1 bonus to any opposed Seducin' or Talkin' skill check for the purposes of deceiving another or resisting an attempt upon them.

PUBLIC SCANDAL: An entertainer has the dubious distinction of being able to manipulate people for good or ill. Many used their wiles on members of the opposite sex to destroy their reputations while under the employ of another. Some used their abilities to help society by spreading misinformation, dispelling untruths about a person's character or providing important information to agencies such as law enforcement or the government. A character that succeeds at a Seducin' roll or three Talkin' skill checks in a row gains the ability to reduce the



NOTORIETY of the target. This point can be kept by the entertainer or transferred to another character. NOTORIETY gained this way is automatically lost at the end of the game session.

SURPRISING JACK OF ALL TRADES: "How'd I know how to crack a safe? Well... I had a role in a play once in Boston..." The entertainer picks up bits of information from all over. While they are certainly not an expert on the subject, their knowledge can still be useful. Once per game session, if the entertainer can make a successful Knowin' skill check at a -2 penalty, they gain any skill they want as if it were at skill rank 1. They still have to make a normal skill check to actually accomplish the task.

Hired Hand

Hired hands are similar to drifters but without such severe personal problems. They travel in order to earn a livelihood, not from a desire to fit in. Most hired hands function as cowpokes that move from cattle drive to cattle drive. Occasionally, they work as ranch hands when additional manpower is needed, or if there is a large project that needs to be done, such as construction of a new building or large amounts of fencing.

BORN IN THE SADDLE: Hired hands spend a lot of time in a saddle and have a greater understanding of horses. A horse ridden by a hired hand is never subject to being spooked. The hired hand also does not suffer the -1 penalty associated with shooting from a galloping horse. They still suffer the -2 penalty if shooting while running wide open.

LAY OF THE LAND: Knowing shortcuts and areas to avoid are important to hired hands while on cattle drives. The hired hand gains a +1 bonus to any Knowin' skill checks to determine hostile indian activity, dangerous terrain, time saving shortcuts, the location of watering holes and other useful range information.

QUALITY HORSEFLESH: The hired hand has few possessions more dear to him than his trusty steed. Hired hand characters automatically gain a superior mount without spending two character points as detailed under *Chasing/Fleeing/Charging* in the **Optional Rules & Mechanics** section of this book.

PREACHER

The preacher was not only the spiritual guide for his faithful. They were often the sole unifying force behind the community. God looks after his children, but even they occasionally needed to take up arms to protect their faith.

MAN OF THE CLOTH: Even the most hardened outlaw would find it hard to shoot a priest. If a preacher character is targeted by anyone while wearing their clerical garb, the shooter must make a BRAINS/Thinkin' check at -1 to be able to pull the trigger. Anyone who shoots a priest suffers a -1 to any combat skills for a day afterwards, shaken at his own actions. These penalties are completely negated if the priest isn't dressed appropriately or is actively brandishing a weapon.

SHEPHERDING THE FLOCK: The preacher gains his true power from the solidarity of his congregation. With a successful Readin' and Talkin' check, the preacher can pick a sermon that inspires his audience. All of those who listened gain a +1 bonus to any opposed action they may find themselves in for the next twenty-four hours. This includes facing off with enemies, resisting seduction attempts, being manipulated through Talkin', etc.

BY THE GRACE OF GOD: The faithful must be unshakable in their confidence in the will of God, and their leader must exemplify this. A preacher character can choose to "burn" one point of their WITS to automatically have an enemy action fail. The preacher must announce that he is going to do this before the action is resolved.

OTHER CHARACTERS

What happens when you have a player who wants to make a character not covered by an archetype, such as a train engineer? It is easy to accomplish with a small bit of work on the part of the referee.

When you want to create a new character type, ignore rolling on the Background and Style Tables and create the character as normal. Add 1 Character Point to put into any attribute they wish and an extra 1D3 skill points toward any appropriate skills.

You may wish to give them two or three special abilities that you make up, or you can allow the player to come up with them. Remember, as the ref you have final say in anything that you think might unbalance your game. Its also a good idea to know that someone wants to create a "nonstandard" character beforehand so you can work them up instead of dragging down the game as everyone arrives ready to play. You can also work around this by just creating the characters ahead of time and handing them out to players. Some people like this method - others would prefer to have the players make their own. Be flexible. The idea is to have fun not an argument.

For example with our engineer:

SPEED DEMON: Jacob was always obsessed with speed so it was only natural that he worked hard to become a train engineer. He used to run his father's horses ragged, racing them against his friends before becoming the engineer that his company went to when they needed to set a new record. Jacob gains a +1 to his Ridin' skill from his past with racing horses as well as a +1 bonus to his NOTORIETY among other train engineers.

NERVES OF STEEL: His crew swears that, if their company ordered Jacob to drive their train into the gates of Hell itself, he'd do so with a grin on his lips and the throttle wide open. Jacob gains a +1 bonus to his GUTS.

See? Not difficult at all. "Jacob" had his special abilities as well as a little bit of his history decided on and typed out all in about fifteen minutes. If you don't want to use special abilities, feel free although I think they allow for a bit more diversity of characters.

OPTIONAL RULES & MECHANICS

The 1PG system is designed to stress cinematic rather than tactical action. However, the following optional rules and mechanics are provided for those referees and players who would like to use a more tactical perspective.

BRAWLING

1PG combat tends to be deadly and even a few punches can kill a character. Although this is true in real life, most western and pulp heroes are usually made of sturdier stuff. By adding a few variant rules, the referee can create this feeling.

ATTACKS AND DAMAGE: In order to deal non-lethal damage, refs may choose to add a derived attribute called **Umph**. Umph is determined by a character's STURDINESS and Fightin' skill. Add these two together and multiply the result by five. For example, Matthias Dean, the famous gunslinger, has a STURDINESS of 2 and a Fightin' skill of 2. His Umph rating would be 20 $((2+2) \times 5)$.

Umph functions as "phantom" BLOOD. Whenever damage is dealt to a character from punches, kicks or other weapons designed to render non-lethal damage, the damage is removed from Umph first before damage starts to carry over into their actual BLOOD points. Yes, this means that you have to track lethal and non-lethal damage separately. That is the price of more complexity in the system - more bookkeeping. When a character's Umph hits zero, they are knocked out. Damage inflicted past this point comes directly from BLOOD.

RECOVERY FROM A KO: A character remains unconscious for 1D6 rounds. They regain consciousness, but lose half of their Umph score (round down). If they are knocked out again, they return with a quarter of their original Umph. If they get knocked out again, the damage is extremely serious and the player is either out of the game or borderline comatose. A full night's sleep replenishes all lost Umph.

ADDITIONAL REALISM: A human body can only withstand so much abuse before it begins to become impaired. After the recovery from the first knockout, reduce a character's BRAINS attribute by 1. This is a representation of "punch drunk." If this reduces a character's attribute to 0, he needs medical attention quickly, as he is about to go into a coma. Assuming that a character can get knocked out a second time, his BRAINS attribute is reduced by another point and both STURDINESS and

CRAFTINESS are reduced by 1. If he's still standing, the third time will be the charm. BRAINS is reduced by another 1 and they're headed for coma-land as no attribute can be higher than 3.

RECOVERY FROM A SEVERE BEATING: This is only used in conjunction with the Additional Realism optional rule above. Umph is completely returned with a full night's sleep, but attribute damage heals at a rate of 1 point per week.

MOVEMENT

Characters are able to move their STURDINESS in meters per round. They can double this if they run. For example, Ted Stafford the Cowboy has a STURDINESS of two. He can move two meters per round walking or four running (In *Six Gun*, one round is roughly two to three seconds as it's a fast paced game). Each point in the Runnin' skill will add on another meter of movement. So, if Cowboy Ted also had two points of Runnin', he could run another two meters for a total of six meters/round (18 feet). Otherwise, he only walks his base STURDINESS in meters.

HEALING

Characters heal at the rate of 1D3 points of BLOOD per day. Another character trying to administer medical assistance can use a Knowin' skill check and add 1D3 points of BLOOD for each Knowin' skill point. For example: Cowboy Ted gets shot up real bad and his friends drag his bleeding carcass back to the saloon to patch him up. He'll automatically regain 1D3 BLOOD for spending the night, but his friend Matthias, who has two points of Knowin', tries to fix him up with a stiff whiskey and a pair of rusty pliers. It may be unorthodox, but he makes a successful check! Ted will gain back a total of 3D3 BLOOD by morning.

Healing rates can vary with the amount of "realism" you'd like to portray. You might want to keep it deadly with *Six Gun* if you're going for a spaghetti western but really crank up the healing rate if you're going for the more rough n' tumble, heroic nature of high action cowboy heroes.

HORSEBACK ACTION!

There are a lot of things that your heroes will want to accomplish on horseback. The least of your worries as the referee is the one where they ride off into the sunset with the girl. As such, here are some of the most common situations that you're likely to encounter in a western.

CHASING, FLEEING, OR CHARGING: Your standard horse walks and trots at five meters per round. This is doubled to ten meters at a gallop and fifteen at a breakneck run or charge. For all characters starting the game with a horse or buying one in game, it is assumed that they are purchasing a normal horse. However, Character Points may be spent to get a better animal. For each Character Point spent (up to a maximum of two), the horse's movement is increased by one meter. An additional meter is achieved by each point in Ridin' skill the character possesses, as they are able to effectively control and maneuver such an extraordinary mount. All horses, regardless of points spent, have 20 BLOOD.

For example, Lightnin' Smith purchases a horse and spends two Character Points on it. He also has two points in Ridin'. That's an additional four meters per round increase in all the different speeds of the mount. Thus, his new horse can walk or trot at nine meters, gallop at fourteen and flat-out run or charge at nineteen meters. That's one fast pony!

JUMPING: Occasionally you'll want to have your mounted character hurdle obstacles or barriers. Horses can only jump if they are travelling at gallop or faster. A horse is able to jump one-fourth of their movement speed vertically in meters and one-third horizontally. Also, only superior mounts (those bought with additional Character Points) or those horses that have been with the character for more than one game will jump obstacles they can't see over.

TRAMPLING: Every so often some durn fool won't have the common sense to get out of your way, or your purposely charge and run them down. Trampling damage is equal to the number of meters the horse was moving at the time of impact plus five. A normal galloping horse will typically inflict fifteen points of damage. Trampling can only be attempted at a gallop or faster and only against an unmounted opponent.

SHOOTING FROM HORSEBACK: Firing a weapon accurately from a moving mount is not as easy as some people seem to believe. For each speed increment over a walk or trot, the shooter incurs a -1 penalty to their Shootin' rolls. So,

a -1 at a gallop and a -2 if running at full speed.

Conversely, dodging incoming fire on horseback is easier as the shooters are typically having a hard enough time as it is. For each two ranks of Ridin' skill the target has (round down), he gets a +1 bonus to his Runnin' skill for purposes of evading. This applies to shots targeted at the either the rider or the mount.

However, getting shot while riding can be dangerous. The struck character must make a STURDINESS check or immediately be thrown from his saddle. He not only takes the damage from the shot but also damage as if he were Trampled based on the speed he was travelling when he was shot.

LEAPING FROM HORSEBACK: One of the more risky maneuvers that can be attempted, the player physically jumps from his mount onto another mount or vehicle. If it is occupied, the leap may be treated as a normal opposed Fightin' roll. If the jumper fails, he falls and takes damage as if he were Trampled (see above). If the driver fails, he must immediately make a STURDINESS check to see if he can maintain his seat. If not, he falls off and takes damage as if Trampled (see above). Otherwise, he maintains his balance and the fight can continue as normal with the exception that both attacker and defender suffer a -1 penalty to all rolls due to their precarious positions.

Jumping onto an unoccupied vehicle or mount simply requires a CRAFTINESS/Ridin' check at a -1 penalty.

SPOOKING A HORSE: While a very useful beast of burden, horses still have some issues. Loud noises can spook even a well-trained horse. For the most part, you can safely assume that gunfire is expected, but loud explosions, Indian war cries or nearby train whistles can cause problems. Have the rider make a CRAFTINESS/Ridin' roll to see if he can keep the horse calm. Failure means that the horse runs at full speed wherever it feels safety lies (ref's discretion) until the PC can make a successful check to control the animal.



INDIANS

What do you do if you want to turn the tables and play indians instead of the usual gunslingers, cowboys or desperadoes, and pay back the white man for taking your land and killing the buffalo?

THE TRIBE

The PCs are members of a tribe that they can name or you have created. A tribe will usually consist of 1D6x50 members. At least half of their number will be women, children and elderly. The rest will be NPC Scouts or Braves. It is up to the PCs to watch out for the best interests of the tribe and protect it in ways that go far beyond simple warfare. Most groups stay away from warfare and violence as much as possible.

Characters can be created as normal but use the **Indian Background Table** at the bottom of this page, as opposed to the **Injun** entry on the *Six Gun* character sheet.

PLOT HOOKS/SCENARIO IDEAS

What follows are some simple ideas and basic sketches for scenarios in tribal settings. These are left up to the ref to flesh out but should present you with a wide variety of game ideas that you can play without having to resort to the dreaded "running battle of the week" syndrome too often.

HARSH WINTER

Due to another nearby tribe that has been making attacks on US Army patrols in the area, the increased military presence has penned in the tribe; ordinarily, they would have migrated to warmer climes with the coming of the early frost. Instead, everyone is trying to remain low because the Army doesn't distinguish between hostile and friendly Indians when it's snowing and everyone's holding rifles. Food is running low and the last hunting party came back empty-handed. It is up to the PCs to go hunt or somehow procure food for the starving tribe. They must somehow avoid or make a deal with the Army patrols as they hunt. To make matters worse, there is also a large hungry grizzly bear lurking about trying to get a last bellyful of anything edible before it beds down for the winter. An especially sadistic referee could also include a pack of hungry wolves roaming after them.

A MARRIAGE RUINED

A marriage between one of the daughters of the PCs' tribe and a famous brave from another tribe signifies a potential period of peace between the two peoples, who were historically very leery of each other. However, during the time leading up to the ceremony as the two tribes are camped together, one of the other tribe's braves is murdered and tracks point to the killer having fled into the forest. A group of PCs is charged to accompany a group of NPCs from the other tribe to track down the killer. Unknown to the PCs, one of the NPCs from the other tribe is the killer and begins killing off the party starting with the NPCs. He's very good and makes everything look like an accident. The ref can toss in some wild animal attacks or have another hostile tribe's scouting party appear to mask some of the killings or to throw the PCs off the track.

BUFFALO POACHERS

White men are encroaching on the fields where your tribe's buf-

falo hunting grounds are. They rarely kill for food but instead seem to enjoy just killing. The problem is getting worse and its time to do something about them before they exterminate your tribe's supply of meat and hides. Protests to any white authority will be ignored. After a few killings, the poachers, who happen to live in a nearby settlement, will claim they were attacked without reason and organize a war party of several well-armed men and bounty hunters. Its kill or be killed! The well being of your tribe depends on you.

MIGRATION

The tribe has departed their current place of residence as the weather begins to get colder and the supplies of wild game begin to decrease. As the tribe journeys forward in search of new lands, they encounter a lost and stranded prospector and his pregnant daughter. He will beg the PCs to help them reach a missionary that is rumored to be nearby so that they can get help from the priest there. In the meantime, the weather is getting colder. Do the tribe help the man and his daughter in their search for a missionary that might not even exist or move along and leave them to their fates?



INDIAN BACKGROUND TABLE (IDB)

- | | |
|-----|---|
| 1 | SQUAW +1 Dressin', Fixin' and Runnin' |
| 2 | SCOUT +1 Ridin', Runnin' and Shootin' |
| 3-4 | BRAVE +1 Fightin', Sturdiness and GUTS |
| 5 | SHAMAN +1 Dancin', Knowin' and PRESENCE |
| 6 | CHIEF* +1 NOTORIETY, Thinkin' and Talkin' |

*There can obviously be only one Chief at any given time. Let the players dice off to see who gets it or award it to the one that has the highest BRAINS attribute.

OTHER ADVENTURES

THE SPANISH PRISONER

This classic con game can start anywhere, for example in a saloon or the coach of a train. It begins with a gentleman in slightly tattered clothing, obviously a well-heeled man who is down on his luck. He may strike up a conversation and show the players a portrait of a beautiful woman - his sister. He then explains that she is separated from him, maybe a prisoner of a Mexican bandit, and he has been unable to talk the authorities into doing anything. The bandits will not let her go unless they receive payment. In another twist, the con comes on more slowly, the mark is actually invited to meet the sister and becomes emotionally invested. Then she is kidnapped, she and her brother are revealed to be in some horrible trouble but the heroes can help. Maybe it's money, something has to be stolen or something else that they can extort by circumstance out of the players. The nature of the con is simple but the execution is in the details. This is one of the more social types of adventures that can provide a sense of an involvement in the power struggles of the west before they discover that they are being played for suckers.

THE LAND GRAB

A classic theme of western TV shows and movies is the land grab. Cattle were the lifeblood of the old west, the real currency that fed people. As the west began to fill up, the early growth of wealthy cattle ranchers slowed and land became scarce. Eventually, ranches abutted each other. For the ambitious, the idea of having enough did not sit well and by hook or crook they would try to take their neighbor's land. In some stories this was accomplished by devaluing the land with crime and trying to buy it, scaring the owners away, hurting their business until they would have no choice but to leave, or just murdering them. It was (at least in fiction) a culture where the acquisition of land was a common source of friction and government authorities frequently had to intervene. Many western plots revolved around either defending a territory until the authorities could be involved or dealing with a situation when even the officials were corrupted. This scenario deals with the idea that a land grab is being performed and the authorities (probably the PCs) have been sent by the governor to handle it. Whether they have to shoot the bad guys, arrest and replace the sheriff or even guard the good guy's money on the way to the bank all depends on the scenario. In the reverse land grab, they could be misinformed and whatever they have done has been to aid the real villain (the one they were sent to help) in stealing the real victim's land. Just how much the players can do when they discover this will depend on how insidiousness of the villain.

GOLD FEVER

The number of gold legends is exceeded only by the desire for them. When the first Spanish explorers discovered the incredible wealth of the South American natives, they discovered the legends of the Seven Cities of Gold. Some say that at least one may lie in the American West. As fantastic a legend as it is, the folk tales of mundane mines are the most appetizing to the greedy rather than fanciful. James W. Marshall was the first man to discover gold in what became the California Gold Rush on January 24th, 1848 at Sutter's Mill. Soon people were looking for gold under every stone in the Land of Opportunity. Some people came from other countries looking for the streets paved with gold.

The Superstition Mountains are said to be the place of the legendary Lost Dutchman's Mine. Jacob Waltz (actually German) died after supposedly discovering a huge vein of easily reached gold. He sold gold at various cities to try to keep the gold a secret but eventually on his deathbed admitted to killing many people who got too close to the truth. Some claim that he had gold nuggets as large as a man's fist in his bags with no signs of being dug out with picks. Other legends have since been enmeshed with the Lost Dutchman, including those of the Peraltos, a family of Mexicans who were returning from the Superstition Mountains and supposedly carrying large nuggets of gold ore. Other legends place caches of gold in the form of treasure hidden by pillaging Confederate troops to Jesuits fleeing the influence and wraith of King Carlos of Spain.

TRAIN ROBBERY

In these scenarios the players can take on the roles of outlaws, railway employees, train guards, bodyguards with a dignitary, special agents guarding a museum shipment, the law, or maybe just heroes with a vested interest. Anyway, the scenarios revolve around robbing a train. In the old west, trains were the great revolution. They combined the newest technologies with the need to cross vast uninhabitable plains to carry people and goods. Train robberies consisted of three basic steps. One, boarding the train. This was accomplished by either riding up to the train on horseback, hiding among the passengers, or making it stop; blowing out the tracks and taking out the engineer were the two simplest. Taking over the engine was often preferred, since blowing the tracks required a large amount of explosives - both expensive and dangerous. Having an insider on the train always helped. Next was the actual robbery. Depending on the scenario, a big heist could cover only certain goods on the train, while others might go after the passengers' valuables. Whether violent and brutal or rakish and charming, interacting directly with passengers was always a wildcard. Some tinhorn might always decide to be a hero. Getting away scott free was the final part of the adventure.

THE FAST & THE UNFORTUNATE

By Todd Downing

DISCLAIMER: This adventure is not your typical "point A to point B" story driven Western. It is a much more general framework within which the characters can interact and drive the story.

THE PREMISE: The characters are all gunslingers (or supporting characters) in the annual quick draw contest of Red Gulch, New Mexico. There is a sizable purse to be won... as well as a chance for revenge.

THE SETUP: Whatever the character's true vocation, be it lawman, stagecoach robber, preacher or saloon gal, figure out some kind of connection or sordid past dealing with the town's mayor, Bartholomew Sangré (aka Bloody Bart). Bart is the half-breed offspring of a Mexican bandito and a Southwest dance hall girl, and has been driven to succeed by his harsh life. Although a bit past his prime, he is not a man to be trifled with. He is usually flanked by at least two bodyguards. Other thugs can be seen in balconies, doorways and second-floor windows throughout the town. Perhaps Bloody Bart, the Bastard Bandito, killed a character's loved one, or indulged in any number of atrocities, treachery and malice. Be creative. The more over the top, the better - this is spaghetti, with extra cheese!

THE CONTEST: The Red Gulch quickdraw contest is held every summer. Deadline for entry is June 14. Doc Brady, the town barber, dentist and sawbones, keeps the entrants' names in a large, brown ledger, and all the cash in his safe. This is an obvious formality; Brady is known to be Bart's right-hand stooge. Entry into the contest is \$10 (to cover the gratuity for the undertaker). The purse is put up by Bart and the regional merchants: a whopping \$10,000 in gold and cash. Sure it's nothing more than protection money, but the contest keeps the young guns coming, drawn by greed. Since Bart always wins, a lot of would-be criminals are put down for good, Bart keeps the cash and the cash keeps Bart off the backs of the merchants. Everybody's happy... except for the losers.

THE RULES: A contestant must issue a challenge face to face. No one can back down from a challenge. Doc Brady assigns the time, and the showdown occurs in the main street at the stroke of the appointed hour. Both participants may fire at will until one is hit and yields, or dies. The winner is the last gunfighter standing, and he or she moves up on the tournament tree. Once a contestant has entered, he or she is locked into the contest. Any attempt to run away or subvert the contest will be addressed with extreme prejudice (i.e. you'll get multiple lead injections). Remember that shooting is simultaneous, but the combatant with the higher margin of success is the faster draw... at least that time. In these Westerns, the loser is the only one hit; gunslingers rarely hit each other fatally at the same time.

THE PLOT: This scenario is predicated on the idea that the majority of the plot is generated and conveyed by the players. It hinges on their shadowy pasts, sordid connections and even relationships with each other. Make sure periodic progress is made on one vendetta or

another, interspersed between gunfights. One of the joys of this adventure is that the GM can sit back and let the players do their own thing without worrying about turning left when they should've turned right. Eventually the contestants will be trimmed down to just the PCs. And that's where things get tense.

THE LAST MAN: Unless the players have come up with a decent conspiracy, they will end up killing each other off. Not a bad thing, if they don't want to play cooperatively. It is, after all, up to them. Finally, it will come down to Bloody Bart and the last PC. Of course, if the other characters' deaths have been, um... exaggerated (and they have decided to play cooperatively), they can be ready to do things like shoot Bart's bodyguards, blow up his buildings with dynamite, and generally create a giant commotion. The character with the most terrible grievance against Bart should be the one to dispatch the villain. If that doesn't work, someone else can step in and do the deed.

THE END: There are a number of ways to conclude the adventure. The townsfolk of Red Gulch could be happy to be rid of their tyrannical overlord, and can compensate the characters with food, drink, money and/or affection. Doc Brady, knowing that the characters may have planned to dispatch his boss, could be caught trying to skip town with the prize money. Conversely, Brady could have helped the characters fake deaths or overcome wounds in order to help the town. In any case, the merchants who have been paying protection money to Bloody Bart all these years will be happy to be rid of their foe, and the people of Red Gulch will be happy to have one less megalomaniac outlaw to deal with. Of course, any characters wishing to remain in Red Gulch will have a law enforcement job and the continued admiration of the populace. Whatever happens, tie up all loose ends, say goodbye in the sappiest way possible, and roll credits.

Bartholomew Sangré (aka Bloody Bart)

STURDINESS 2/ Fightin' 1 Shootin' 4; PURDINESS 1;
CRAFTINESS 2/ Gamblin' 1; BRAINS 2; BLOOD 17
Equipment: Sixgun (8 damage)

Bloody Bart Bodyguard/Thug

STURDINESS 3/ Shootin' 2; PURDINESS 1; CRAFTINESS
1/ Ridin' 1; BRAINS 1; BLOOD 12
Equipment: Sixgun (8 damage)

Rival Gunslinger

STURDINESS 2/ Shootin' 2; PURDINESS 2/ Posin' 1;
CRAFTINESS 2; BRAINS 1/ Knowin' 1; BLOOD 13
Equipment: Sixgun (8 damage)

TREASON

By Mark Bruno

THE PREMISE: It's the spring of 1846 and the war between Mexico and the United States for the liberation of the Republic of Texas is in full swing. The American Army, led by General Zachary Taylor, has just defeated General Marianno Arista and his men at the Battle of Palo Alto. By doing so, they have pushed back the enemy to Resaca de la Palma, where the Mexican army will make a final stand lest the Americans overtake them and take the city of Matamoros. Mexican forces desperate for anything to stop the oncoming invasion have struck a deal with a crooked army captain-\$250,000 in Mexican gold bullion for stolen caches of U.S. military firearms. The characters are hired to locate and recover the stolen guns.

THE SETUP: This scenario works best if the player characters are either U.S. Marshals or, preferably, officers with the U.S. Army. A U.S. Army captain, James T. Johnston, catches wind of the Mexican army's plight and hatches an idea to make himself rich, thereby securing his future for years to come. The captain, with some loyal cronies, contacted a commander in the Mexican army and struck a bargain-Johnston agrees to supply Mexican soldados (soldiers) with stolen caches of six-shot Colt revolvers and muzzle-loading rifles for a payment in Mexican gold bullion.

The player characters are called to see their commanding officer (if enlisted) or the fort commander (if playing Marshals) and brought up to date on the theft of the firearms. The officer tells the PCs that on the night in question a group of bandits ambushed a caravan bound for Matamoros to deliver a cache of supplies. The ambushers managed to kill the entire military escort and made off with the guns. The last known location of the caravan was along a stretch of road between Laredo and Matamoros. The officer stresses that the weapons must be recovered if the United States hopes to take the city.

SOMETHING'S ROTTEN IN TEXAS: Eventually, the player characters will need to head for Mexico, but before that it may be wise to begin their investigation at the fort. The most logical place to start would be by questioning the fort's Quartermaster, who requisitioned the supplies and organized the caravan. If the player characters are military personnel then the Quartermaster will speak freely about his involvement with the shipment and should be forthcoming with information. However, if the PCs are U.S. Marshals, have the characters make use of their Talkin' skills, and impose a -1 penalty (he's not particularly happy about working with non-military types). Through their questioning, the player characters learn that Johnston ordered the supplies, and is currently stationed at Laredo.

LAREDO OR BUST: Once the player characters arrive at Laredo they'll have to arrange for a meeting with Captain Johnston. Again, this task will be much easier if they're enlisted men, U.S. Marshals will have a harder time, but with a successful Talkin' roll (again, with a -1 modifier) they should be able to meet with him. Johnston has set up his HQ in a hostel called the Lone Star Saloon and Hotel. At first, the Army captain is subtly elusive, arguing that he cannot help the player characters in their investigation because he doesn't have all of the information himself. He does, however, tell them that Mexican forces stationed near Matamoros most likely attacked the caravan. Before he dismisses the player characters, Johnston supplies them with the mapped route the caravan was to travel and suggests the PCs look for the thieves near Matamoros.

AMBUSH!: Once the PCs finish their business at Laredo it's off to Mexico. The trip can be as elaborate as the GM wishes. The PCs can encounter Mexican banditos or maybe even a few Mexican soldiers. What the GM should plan for, however, is to have the PCs ambushed a few days from Matamoros by American soldiers "sympathetic" to Johnston's goals. These adversaries are actually disguised as Mexican banditos sent to murder the PCs before they locate the stolen weapons. After the ambush, and depending on whether the PCs survive, they should be able to interrogate one of the wounded soldiers. Of course, they should be required to make a Knowin' skill roll to determine that the bandito is actually an American soldier. A subtle interrogation won't work, so the characters will have to beat the information out of him. Should the soldier talk, he will tell the PCs that Captain Johnston is behind the theft and murder of the caravan escort, but doesn't know where the weapons are located.

NO-GOOD VARMINT: The PCs must now make their way back toward Laredo to confront the thieving Johnston and get him on charges of theft and high treason. Unfortunately, they don't have enough evidence to support an arrest, so they'll have to do a little sneaking around to get what they need. Alternatively, for more "take action" types, the PCs can just barge on in, demand Johnston turn himself in, or die fighting. It's unlikely that Johnston will go without a fight, however. If a shootout does occur, Johnston won't hesitate to call in reinforcements. He is a veteran soldier and should be a formidable opponent. If the PCs decide to sneak into the hotel they should do so under cover of darkness, realizing that they could be discovered at any moment. Johnston's "offices" occupy the hotel's second floor.

Regardless of how the PCs proceed to get their evidence, a thorough search of Johnston's office reveals a letter from the Mexican commander, detailing where to make the exchange. The players must now rush to intercept the Mexican forces!

INTERCEPTION!: Armed with the information, the PCs make their way toward the meeting place, a small border town just outside of Matamoros called Reynosa. Not much is required of the player characters at this point except to say they'll need to plan an ambush of their own. Talking to the Mexican soldiers will accomplish nothing save for a bullet in the head. GMs should play up the anticipation and high-anxiety moments before the final confrontation. When the PCs have made their plan, 20 Mexican soldados ride into town towing a wagon laded with Mexican gold bars. When more than half of the soldados have been killed or wounded, the remaining hightail it out of town, leaving the PCs to locate the stolen weapons hidden in a deep well. These and the gold bars should be brought to the American forces at Matamoros and the PCs honored as heroes.

Soldier/Bandito

STURDINESS 1/ Fightin' 1 Shootin' 2; PURDINESS 1;
CRAFTINESS 2/ Runnin' 1; BRAINS 1; BLOOD 13
Equipment: Rifle (12 damage)

Captain Johnston

STURDINESS 2/ Fightin' 2 Shootin' 2; PURDINESS 1;
CRAFTINESS 2/ Runnin' 1; BRAINS 2; BLOOD 20
Equipment: Rifle (12 damage)

HAVE GOLD, WILL TRAVEL

By Mark Bruno

THE PREMISE: Colonel William Busse was one of the Confederate Army's most notorious military officers. But it was not because he was ruthless on the battlefield, commanded an uncanny grasp for tactics and strategy, or survived countless engagements unscathed. Rather, Colonel Busse was known to many in the South as a cold-hearted executioner, who delighted endlessly in giving no quarter to Yankee soldiers (or sympathizers) and made it a point to pilfer and pillage any town through which his regiment passed through. And it made no difference if they were Union camps or Southern towns, cities and villages. To Busse the only thing that mattered was wealth, and lots of it. Unlike many of his peers, who fought in the war against the North for more "honorable" reasons, Busse saw it as an opportunity to get rich quick.

THE SETUP: The scenario assumes the player characters will come from a wide variety of backgrounds, but that they all are adventurous opportunists. Of course, their motives for locating Colonel Busse's gold can vary widely. Additionally, with some modification, the GM can alter this scenario to accommodate U.S. Marshals charged with recovering the gold, which rightfully belongs to the United States Government, or perhaps Pinkertons, who have been hired by a wealthy Southern family to get their wealth back.

LEGEND OF THE LOST GOLD: It's a hot afternoon and the player characters are relaxing in a bustling saloon in San Jose, California. While engaging in various entertainments (drinking and gambling, most likely) one of the player characters overhears an elderly prospector spinning a yarn about the infamous Colonel Busse and his lost gold. According to legend, the prospector says, Busse amassed a great fortune in gold and silver during the war. Afterward, Busse hightailed it out of the South, eventually settling in Sacramento. Yankee sympathizers eventually murdered him in 1875, nearly ten years after General Lee surrendered at the Appomattox Courthouse. Busse never let on where he stashed his war booty, but some claim he buried it somewhere in Yosemite Valley. Intrigued by the prospect of locating a store of gold and silver, the player characters head out toward Sacramento.

GOLD DIGGER: Once the PCs arrive in Sacramento, hunting down sources of information will be relatively easy—everyone living in town knows of Colonel Busse and his legendary lost wealth. It's just that no one's had the gumption to pack up and search for the hidden cache, considering that Yosemite Valley encompasses a large area, and the journey is treacherous. Besides, even after the fervor of the California Gold Rush subsided nearly 15 years ago, folks are more apt to take their chances finding gold in and around Sacramento. Except for "Gold Digger" Pete Boroughs. Gold Digger Pete is a native San Josean, who migrated to Sacramento in 1850 at the onset of the gold rush, and he's been here ever since. Unfortunately, Pete never did manage to strike it rich in Sacramento, so he resigned himself to a life of subtle convenience as owner and proprietor of the Gold Nugget Saloon. Because he's also the saloon's only bartender, Pete has heard his fair share of rumors and gossip, not the least of which regards Colonel Busse's lost gold.

After spending a few days in town, the PCs will meet Gold Digger Pete and strike up a conversation. Picking his brain for tidbits of information with a successful Talkin' skill roll, plus a few dollars for his trouble, will reveal one single important fact. Pete knows, on account of a reliable source, that a map to the Colonel's gold and silver can be found in a hidden vault underneath the Colonel's mansion

(which is now a boarding house). All the PCs need to do is find a way into the house, locate the underground vault and steal away with the map. Unfortunately for the PCs, a member of the James Calhoun gang just happens to be sitting next to them and overhears the conversation.

HOUSE OF ILL REPUTE: Actually, it's not, but considering the legacy that Colonel Busse left behind, it might as well be. In any case, the mansion is now an elegant boarding house that caters to well-off travelers and the like, but the PCs should have no trouble getting a room with a successful Seducin' skill roll. Of course, they can also forego a stay and just break in. A hidden door in the mansion's impressive wine cellar accesses the Colonel's underground vault. The vault is small compared to the wine cellar and features an old roll-top desk; a small, round table with high-backed wooden chairs; a thick Oriental rug (now stained and tattered); and a locked chest. A thick layer of dust and dirt covers the floor of the windowless room, giving the PCs the impression that no one has visited this space in a long time.

The PCs eventually discover that Gold Digger Pete's information was true. Located in a tin lock box, nestled within the locked chest, is a map that leads the way toward Colonel Busse's wealth. While the PCs revel in their discovery, six members of the Calhoun gang, including James Calhoun himself, enter the vault and attack the PCs. While the player characters are engaging the roughnecks, James Calhoun manages to take the map and escape. Luckily for the player characters, the map is relatively simple to follow, so they should have no problems remembering the route (although particularly sadistic GMs can require frequent Thinkin' rolls during the trip to Yosemite Valley).

THE VALLEY: The player characters are able to track the Calhoun gang, who should always remain one step ahead of the PCs. In fact, at some point during the chase, the characters will face an ambush by a few of Calhoun's roughnecks. Eventually, the characters will make it to Yosemite Valley just as the Calhoun gang finish loading up their horses with gold and silver coins and bars. If the players wish to set an ambush themselves, the GM should allow them to do so. Yosemite Valley has many natural resources that the PCs can use to their advantage (can you say avalanche?). Whatever course of action they choose to take, the PCs should face a final showdown with Calhoun and some of his gang. This time, Calhoun has no intention of leaving early. He intends to kill the PCs so there's no one left to tie him back to the discovery of Busse's wealth. Should the PCs manage to kill Calhoun, any remaining roughnecks will quickly lose morale and flee. Once the dust clears, the PCs will find themselves a few hundred thousand dollars richer

Calhoun Gang Member

STURDINESS 2/ Fightin' 1 Shootin' 1; PURDINESS 1;
CRAFTINESS 2/ Ridin' 1; BRAINS 2; BLOOD 15
Equipment: Sixgun (8 damage)

James Calhoun

STURDINESS 3/ Fightin' 2 Shootin' 2; PURDINESS 1;
CRAFTINESS 2/ Ridin' 1 Runnin' 2; BRAINS 1; BLOOD 20
Equipment: Sixgun (8 damage)

INJUN RAID

By Mark Bruno

THE PREMISE: A small, yet bustling frontier town in the rough country of Wyoming has recently been subjected to sporadic, daring nighttime raids by a band of outlaw Indians. It is thought the tribe lives at the base of a mountain range several miles to the north. The enemy tribe sneaks into the town and rustles cattle and horses before stealing off into the night. And since the town sheriff was killed in a gunfight during one of the raids, no one has had any desire to chase off after the Indians or try to locate their hideout, for fear of their own skins. Yet, the townsfolk worry that eventually the Indian's attacks will grow bolder. What's to stop them now from overrunning the town, killing off every man, woman and child, before burning it to ashes?

THE SETUP: This scenario works best if it's incorporated into an existing campaign as a transition or "side quest" between adventures. Of course, it's also complete enough to stand on its own. The player characters arrive in the town of Devil's Creek after a week of traveling out in the open wilderness. Cold, hungry and tired from their journey, the PCs stop in for a brief respite and to re-supply their provisions before heading off again. Once they get settled in and acclimated to their surroundings, an Indian raid transpires that evening.

HAPPY TRAILS: The GM should allow the PCs to get acquainted with the town before they settle down for the evening at a hotel. Like most bustling frontier towns in the mid to late 19th century, Devil's Creek has all the creature comforts—a blacksmith, saloon, general store, hotel, halfway house, etc. Once they finally get settled in for the night, the Indian raid will commence in the early morning hours. The PCs are awakened by the sound of gunshots. A few overzealous residents, sick of being at the mercy of the raiding Indians, decided to take matters into their own hands, but got killed in the process. To add insult to injury, the PCs find that their horses have been stolen as well.

TOWN MEETING: That same night the town officials gather together in the town hall for an impromptu town meeting. They're desperate for a solution, but have no idea as to how to proceed. Additionally, with the sheriff murdered, no one feels brave enough to track the thieves down themselves. The PCs volunteer to bring the criminals to justice and to get their own horses back. Grateful for their assistance, the town mayor deputizes the PCs and provides them with any supplies they need and bids them good luck.

DEAD OR ALIVE: The PCs search for and eventually locate the Indian tribe. However, instead of a tribal settlement, the player characters find a makeshift campsite. If the players decide to scout out the camp they'll soon discover that it's not Indians whom are raiding Devil's Creek. Rather, a group of cattle rustlers disguised as Indians have been stealing livestock. They will also discover that the camp is home to a dozen thieves. During the evening, four men patrol the camp's perimeter, so the PCs will either have to take them out quietly or sneak past them to get their horses back. If the player characters decide to take back the horses and leave without confronting the thieves, so be it. The outlaws will eventually overrun Devil's Creek and the townsfolk worst fears will be realized. However, if the PCs decide to confront the outlaws and either bring them to justice or kill them, the people of Devil's Creek will be forever grateful. Additionally, a slight monetary award will be presented, as well as an opportunity to become the town's full-time sheriffs. This can act as a springboard for an extended campaign.

Cattle Rustler

STURDINESS 2/ Shootin' 2; PURDINESS 1; CRAFTINESS 2/ Ridin' 3; BRAINS 2; BLOOD 14
Equipment: Rifle (12 damage), Sixgun (8 damage)



KIDNAPPED!

By Mark Bruno

THE PREMISE: Wealthy railroad baron Jefferson Stoddard, president of the Stoddard Northern Santa Fe rail line, has recently discovered that his 23-year-old daughter, Adelaide Stoddard, was kidnapped. Desperate to get her back, Stoddard seeks the help of well-known bounty hunters, the PCs, to locate his daughter and bring the kidnapers to justice. What Stoddard doesn't know, and what the PCs will find out, is that Adelaide was not kidnapped. A few years ago the young woman had fallen in love with an up-and-coming train robber named James Bales. Knowing that her father would never approve of the relationship, she and Bales ran off to Austin, Texas to live the rest of their lives in love and in peace.

THE SETUP: Stoddard doesn't wish to broadcast his daughter's "kidnapping," fearing unfavorable media exposure, so he attempts to hire the services of "unofficial" bounty hunters to help locate his daughter and keep everything on the quiet. Stoddard's office is located in Chicago, Illinois and so the PCs are called for a secret meeting at the city's rail yard. Stoddard claims he has no idea who kidnapped his daughter, although he suspects rival rail baron Clinton Goodman, who operates a rail line outside of St. Louis, Missouri. In fact, Stoddard was told by a reliable source that his daughter was last seen in St. Louis not more than a month ago. If the PCs accept the job, and are willing to act in as discreet a manner as possible, he offers them \$50 each up front and a final payment of \$500 each upon the return of his daughter.

HAPPY TRAILS: Once the PCs arrive in St. Louis, their first objective should be to locate the office of Clinton Goodman, although he will be very hard to contact unless the player characters have a very plausible story. If they do manage to meet with Goodman he indefatigably denies any wrong-doing, claiming that's not the way he operates ("That half-witted dolt, Stoddard, may resort to such shenanigans, but I do business the old fashioned way...with respect and good nature."). He also claims to have never seen Adelaide ("and I know the comings and goings of everyone in this town!"), and suggests the PCs contact Willy Rawlings.

SHADY DEALIN'S: Rawlings is an ex-con who lives in an impoverished section of the city at a roughneck saloon called the Rusty Nail. He would just as easily sell someone down the river as sell information. Locating Rawlings is relatively easy, everyone in town knows him, but getting him to talk is another matter. Greasing his palms will certainly help, though. Through their meeting with the ex-con, the PCs find out that Adelaide and Bales were, in fact, in town. The train robber asked Rawlings to secure a safe house for him in Austin, Texas before he and Adelaide high-tailed it across the border to Mexico.

CUT 'EM OFF AT THE PASS: The PCs will no doubt wish to make a run for Austin before Bales can move Adelaide across the border to Mexico. Once they arrive at the capital city, the player characters will have to do a lot of legwork to locate Bales' secret hideout. Once they manage to pinpoint his location, they'll have to make a decision as to how they'll proceed. Charging the safe house will likely get someone killed. Bales is an accomplished gunfighter and makes no bones about protecting the love of his life. One way or another, the PCs should eventually learn that Adelaide chose to run off with Bales because she loves him dearly.

TOUGH CHOICES: Now the PCs must make a decision: do they let Bales and Adelaide go off to Mexico and risk losing out on \$500 a piece? Or is a job a job? Again, if the PCs decide to bring in Bales and take Adelaide back to Chicago, the gunfighter won't go without a fight. If the PCs manage to kill him, they'll be able to deliver Adelaide back to her father, but GMs shouldn't let the player characters off that easy. If any opportunity presents itself, Adelaide will try to escape. She has a lot of money and can travel as far away as need be. If, on the other hand, the PCs do decide to help Bales and Adelaide escape, the consequences could be much greater.

HERE COMES THE POSSE: As the PCs help prepare for the trip across the Mexican border, an acquaintance of Bales' tells the gunfighter that Adelaide's father knows where they're located and where they're headed. He's summoned a band of thugs to deal with Jimmy and get his daughter back. Unbeknownst to the PCs, Goodman contacted Stoddard, letting the Chicago rail baron know that he was deeply offended at having been accused of kidnapping a rival's daughter. Stoddard managed to save face and learned of Rawlings, who, under pressure from Stoddard's thugs, sold out Jimmy and the PCs.

RUN FOR THE BORDER: Racing against time, the PCs manage to get to the Mexican border only to find that Stoddard's men have beaten them to the punch. In order for Bales and Adelaide to get across, he and the PCs must fight their way through a dozen thugs. Should the PCs manage to kill their opponents, they will earn the undying gratitude of Bales and Adelaide, and the enmity of Stoddard. All in day's work.

James Bales

STURDINESS 2/ Fightin' 2 Shootin' 2; PURDINESS 3;
CRAFTINESS 1/ Runnin' 2; BRAINS 3; BLOOD 20

Equipment: Sixgun (8 damage)

Thug

STURDINESS 2/ Fightin' 2 Shootin' 1; PURDINESS 1;
CRAFTINESS 1/; BRAINS 2; BLOOD 12

Equipment: Sixgun (8 damage)

THE DARK TRAIL

By James Stubbs

Adapted from a screenplay by Mack Lewis and Todd Downing

THE PREMISE: The players are all cowboys who work at the Thompson-Gray Ranch in the Idaho Territory circa 1873. It is spring-time and the players are driving a new herd into the ranch. Everyone is tired but spirits are high now that everyone is home from the long trip. As they arrive, they notice a carriage outside the main house. Colleen Gray, the daughter of one of the owners of the ranch, notices the character that has the highest score in PURDINESS. Let this player know of her interest. The players arrive just in time for supper and the aromas drifting out of the main house are mouth-watering especially after weeks of nothing but beans, cornbread and coffee.

THE SETUP: During supper, the players are all summoned into the main drawing room. There they encounter James Thompson, one of the ranch owners, and Charles Fleming, his business manager. They are told that Conrad Gray, the other owner as well as Colleen's father, had moved up north to establish Upper Station, a place for the herd to reside during the summer. It has now been a year without any contact and recent reports of Indian activity there has Thompson worried. He wants the players to go investigate and find out what has happened. He offers a year's pay in advance as well as fighting pay if it comes to that. He informs them that they are to travel north to Boulder Basin. There they will meet up with a company man called Dick Brooks. He will provide the players with directions to Upper Station as well as updated information on Indian activity in the area.

FIRST LEG: The trail takes the PCs north past the Snake River, up into the Sawtooth Wilderness and, from there, it is a two to three week ride to Boulder Basin. Challenge the PCs with some random encounters to spruce up what would be an ordinary trip or, if you have a particularly chatty group, let them talk in character. A small Indian scouting party or wild animals are good ideas. Don't throw anything too challenging at them! They'll need that precious health later on!

WAGON TRAIN: About one week from the end of the first leg of their journey, the players will encounter a northward bound wagon train. Let the players talk to the various members of the train but one family in particular is important: The Pratts. The train is traveling to the Snake River as well and will then depart to the west. PCs are invited to travel along. William Pratt is traveling with his two young sons, Burt and Lee, and his teenaged daughter, Emily. Emily will engage in a young romance with one of the PCs as long as it isn't the one who Colleen is interested in. Make her engaging and shy in the awkward teenage way.

After a day or so of traveling, the train reaches the Snake River. Wagons must ford across but the Pratt's wagon runs into problems. It catches on a rock and tips up - tossing Emily into the water underneath! If the wagon rolls backwards, she will be crushed! Anyone attempting to rescue her must make a BRAINS/Thinkin' check to react in time. It is important to the story to have her survive so fudge the roll if you must. A few nights later, after you let things calm down somewhat, have any characters standing watch make a BRAINS/Knowin' check to see if they notice the faked animal calls around the train. It should be obvious that the train is being followed

and observed. Play up the paranoia generated by tossing in sudden noises or animals like hares leaping out of undergrowth. The train splits off to the west to head toward Fort Boise the next day leaving the players on their own again. Give the PCs enough time to say their good-byes, especially the PC who carried on a romance with Emily.

A GRUESOME DISCOVERY: The next day the players discover a ruined wagon with headless bodies of four travelers surrounding it. The bodies are covered in bullet and arrow wounds. Require a WITS check from seeing such a horrible sight. Any player can get a Knowin' check at +1 to realize that Indians typically scalp their victims, not behead them. Something is wrong here. At this time, the players spot an Indian on a ledge across from them. He will attempt to flee at the first shots. If they kill him, they will find that he is carrying a .50 caliber army rifle - not something that Indians should have. A BRAINS/Knowin' check reveals that this rifle is typically carried by the US Cavalry.

BOULDER BASIN: Soon the players will catch sight of Boulder Basin. The weather is getting cold and a light coat of snow is on the ground as they enter mountainous territory. They will pass several Indians camped outside the town. It is obvious that they are very ill. A BRAINS/Knowin' check reveals it to be tuberculosis. Boulder Basin is your typical western town. The players will pass a group of missionaries loading supplies into a wagon on the way into town. Allow the players to purchase supplies. Warm clothing and blankets should be a priority unless the players have equipped themselves for it ahead of time. The man they're here to see, Dick Brooks, is in the saloon waiting for them.

Brooks outlines the next leg of their trip to Upper Station. They'll need to follow Wood River north, cut west across Galena Peak and they should arrive at Fort Shipman, an abandoned fort that is being used as Upper Station. He'll warn the players of rumors of Shoshone, Nez Perce and Bannock Indians congregating near the fort. There are also rumors that they are carrying army rifles probably taken from the cavalry group that was sent to investigate and never returned. Players can also sense that he's hesitant about telling them something but, if pressured, will pull out a letter from his jacket. He explains that it was intercepted from an Indian attempting to put it in the town's post. It reads:

Dearest Colleen:

Please excuse my prolonged absence. The situation here has not allowed me to contact you previously. Understand that things are no longer safe for you there. You must leave as soon as possible. Escape the tyranny of those men. Do not ask why, just act as I bid you. Please, my beloved. Please. Escape.

Your loving father.

Brooks wants the players to continue along to Fort Shipman and find out what's going on. Find out if Gray is still alive. If he is a prisoner, rescue him. If he has allied himself with the Indians, kill him.

MISSIONARY SLAUGHTER: Only a few hours outside of town they will hear the sharp cracks of gunfire. If they investigate, they will encounter the burned remains of the missionary wagon. The missionaries are all dead from various gunshot and arrow wounds. Have the players make another WITS Check, as there is a dead woman among the bodies. These bodies are not beheaded. There is one dead Indian among them. He also has one of the army rifles. Tracks lead off through the trees. If the players pursue, four Indians ambush them as they clear the trees. Three are armed with bows and the fourth has one of the army rifles. They will surrender after half their number is killed. The surviving two will attempt to bargain for their release by trading their war bag.

Inside the bag are several boxes of rifle ammunition, some beads and jewelry. A successful BRAINS/Thinkin' check will reveal that one of the pieces of jewelry inside was seen around Emily Pratt's neck before they left the wagon train. The player who became attracted to Emily should be required to make an additional WITS check. If the PCs kill them, they can continue onto the fort. Otherwise, they can take the Indians prisoner and do what they want with them. Either way, the odds are that everyone is headed back to Fort Shipman anyway.

FORT SHIPMAN/UPPER STATION: As the players approach Fort Shipman, they can see hundreds of teepees pitched around the old fort. An armed band of over a dozen Indians are there to meet the PCs. They are taken prisoner and led inside the fort. They will attempt to do this nonviolently unless the players put up a fight. The players will notice a man standing in the old guard tower holding a cavalry sword watching them. They can't make out features but it is a pretty good guess that this is Conrad Gray.

As they enter the fort, Lt. Forsythe, apparently the only surviving member of the cavalry expedition, meets them. He keeps babbling about how happy he is to see them. It becomes obvious quickly that he is out of his mind and has developed a god complex towards Gray. He practically worships him and believes that Gray is following a divine mandate and that everything must be for a greater good that he just can't understand. Portray Forsythe as very energetic and fervent in his mannerisms. He is very prone to jerking about erratically and dancing with the Indians.

CONRAD GRAY: After some time of being held by the Indians, the players are summoned into the presence of Conrad Gray. He is very ill and attended to by an Indian woman who can only be his mistress. A BRAINS/Knowin' check at +1 reveals that Conrad also has tuberculosis and has reached the final stages. Gray tells them that he has found gold on the nearby Indian lands and that Thompson is just out to claim the land for his own by killing or driving off the Indians there. He has documented all the atrocities committed against the Indians and is organizing them into an army to repay the oppression and violence inflicted upon his people. He seems to be looking for acceptance but its unlikely he'll get any from the players.

As they are led back to their holding area, they will find Emily's head on a pike. Have everyone makes a WITS check at the gruesome spectacle. The player who was attached to Emily must make this check at -1.

THE DEATH OF CONRAD GRAY: After another day, the players are once again summoned to see Gray. He is looking much worse and his death is immanent. He discloses his attack plan as sweeping

down onto the Thompson-Gray Ranch after destroying everything in their path. It is obviously his last means of revenge against Thompson who has betrayed him for his greed. He begs the players to take his notes on the atrocities, his only photograph of Colleen and his strong-box full of gold nuggets and leave. He will then die.

The Indians will allow the players to leave unmolested before they set fire to the fort as both a funeral pyre for Gray and a way to kill the disease there.

RETURN TO THE RANCH: The surviving players return to the ranch. It is in their best interest to do so anyway to convince Colleen to leave. They can attempt to confront Thompson but he will remain unrepentant for his actions or his greed. He is a firm believer in manifest destiny and nothing is going to stand in his way. The players leave off into the sunset hoping to find a better tomorrow and leave their darkened pasts behind them.

James Thompson

STURDINESS 1/ Shootin' 1; PURDINESS 2; CRAFTINESS 3; BRAINS 3/ Knowin' 2 Thinkin' 3; BLOOD 14
Equipment: Sixgun (8 damage)

Charles Fleming

STURDINESS 1/ Shootin' 1; PURDINESS 2; CRAFTINESS 1; BRAINS 3/ Thinkin' 3; BLOOD 13
Equipment: Sixgun (8 damage)

Indian Scout

STURDINESS 2/ Fightin' 1 Shootin' 2; PURDINESS 2; CRAFTINESS 1/ Ridin' 2; BRAINS 2; BLOOD 14
Equipment: Bow (7 damage), Knife (3 damage)

Dick Brooks

STURDINESS 2/ Shootin' 1; PURDINESS 1; CRAFTINESS 2/ Ridin' 2; BRAINS 2/ Knowin' 3; BLOOD 13
Equipment: Sixgun (8 damage)

Indian Braves

STURDINESS 2/ Fightin' 2 Shootin' 2; PURDINESS 2; CRAFTINESS 3/ Ridin' 2; BRAINS 1; BLOOD 15
Equipment: Bow (7 damage), Rifle (12 damage), Tomahawk (4 damage) or Knife (3 damage)

Lt. Forsythe

STURDINESS 2/ Fightin' 1 Shootin' 1; PURDINESS 1; CRAFTINESS 2/ Dancin' 2 Ridin' 2; BRAINS 1; BLOOD 12

Conrad Gray

STURDINESS 1/ Shootin' 1; PURDINESS 1; CRAFTINESS 3/ Ridin' 1; BRAINS 3/ Knowin' 3 Thinkin' 2; BLOOD 10
Equipment: Sixgun (8 damage), Saber (5 damage)