PYRAMID

WILD WEST

ASHIWI COUNTRY
by Matt Riggsby

A WESTWARD-SHAMBLING HORDE
by Sean Punch

STEAMBOATS AND LOCOMOTIVES OF THE OLD WEST
by David L. Pulver

OUTLAWS AND ARROWS
by Christopher R. Rice

FAMOUS WILD WEST GUNFIGHTS
by Hans-Christian Vortisch

STEVE JACKSON GAMES

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Pale Blue: In This Issue

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Purple: Systemless Features

COVER ART
Loston Wallace

INTERIOR ART
Matt Riggsby

IN THIS ISSUE

Howdy, pardner! It's time to saddle up with this month's *Pyramid*. This issue, we get on a horse and ride into the Wild West in search of adventure.

When you need a friendly face out West, visit *Ashiwi Country*. Matt Riggsby – co-author of **GURPS Low-Tech Companion 3: Daily Life and Economics** – reveals the history, culture, religion, government, and other details of the Zuni in late 19th-century New Mexico. This meaty guide in the vein of Riggsby's **GURPS Hot Spots** series has everything you need for a campaign or fascinating destination. Two full-color maps of their central settlement are included.

Bring action to your Wild West campaign with *Outlaws and Arrows!* With this advice from Christopher R. Rice on how to adjust **GURPS Action** templates and lens for an Old West setting – plus two new templates, two new lenses, and plenty of adventure ideas – you'll be in search of exciting opportunities on the range in no time.

Travel to new locations in style on the *Steamboats and Locomotives of the Old West*. David L. Pulver – **GURPS** guru of all things vehicular – presents historical information and **GURPS** stats for two iconic modes of transportation in the late 19th century in this month's Eidetic Memory.

The second half of the 1800s was a time of death – battles, epidemics, harsh weather, and more caused many lives to come to untimely ends. And where there's death, there's *A Westward-Shambling Horde*. Sean Punch – author of **GURPS Zombies** – presents 12 potential Western-themed scenarios for returning dead, complete with tips for using **Zombies** to bring these ideas to "life."

When you need inspiration for your next shootout, turn to *Famous Wild West Gunfights*. The author of **GURPS Tactical Shooting,** Hans-Christian Vortisch, uses that volume to present meticulous breakdowns of six famous shootist encounters (real and fictional), describing what each participant did in **GURPS** terms during each second of the action. It's an ultimate expression of how you can model anything in **GURPS!**

This issue wraps up with a Random Thought Table that breaks down the Western into some component cogs. Whether you're looking to add some action to your Western game, a new locale that can fit into many campaigns, or a steamboat to take a break on, this issue of *Pyramid* has more gold than a newly struck mine . . . and it's yours – *all yours! YEE-HAW!*

I wish I could find words to express the trueness, the bravery, the hardihood, the sense of honor, the loyalty to their trust and to each other of the old trail hands.

– Charles Goodnight

FROM THE EDITOR

GO WEST, YOUNG GAMER

Or, if you're like Your Humble Editor, "not-so-young gamer" . . .

Dungeons & Dragons made its debut as its own game from TSR in 1974 (moving beyond its *Chainmail* origins). The Western-themed *Boot Hill* was TSR's third roleplaying game, released in 1975. So Western gaming has a *long* pedigree in the tabletop world.

One reason for its longevity is that the Western is a remarkably versatile genre. In the same way that fantasy allows a gamut of possibilities ranging from sword-and-sandal to epic fantasy to dungeon-crawling, the Western has room for black-and-white morality; shades of gray, psychological exploration; mythic gaming; and ethical dilemmas.

It's also a surprisingly *portable* genre. The conventional wisdom is that a setting can't be popular unless you add magic, but adding Western elements to other genres is almost as popular: steampunk Western, horror Western, space Western, 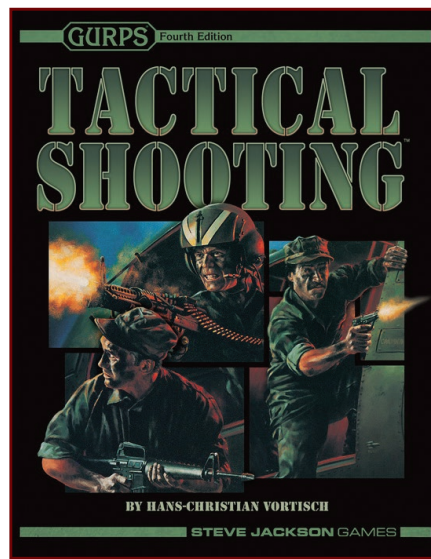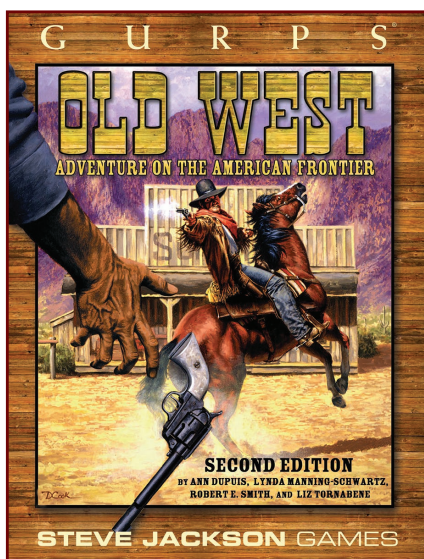and so on. (This is especially true if you break down the Western into baser components – see pp. 37-38 for more insight there).

Beyond that, the Western is well suited for a self-contained part of a larger (different) campaign. No fewer than *three* of the Star Trek television series ventured into the West for an episode (an "easy costume" week, at least in the 1960s). It's equally easy to envision a *Westworld*-like situation where modern-day heroes find themselves donning 10-gallon hats and holsters.

Whether you're looking to craft a self-contained one-shot, an ongoing saga, an alien planet or VR world with a familiar trope, or to add a few new elements to an existing campaign, the Western is as rich a vein to mine now as it was at the dawn of the roleplaying game hobby.

WRITE HERE, WRITE NOW

Did this issue ride into town and set things right? Let us know! Send a private telegram to **pyramid@sjgames.com,** or join the lively town discussion online at **forums.sjgames.com.**

ASHIWI COUNTRY

BY MATT RIGGSBY

There is a small but enduring civilization still surviving on its native land in western New Mexico. They call themselves the Ashiwi. Most of the rest of us know them by a name inherited from the Spanish: the Zuni. The Zuni have lived with their culture in remarkably good condition for centuries, and they are among the best documented of native Americans.

This article discusses the *shiwi-na-kwin*, the land of the Zuni, concentrating on the later 19th and early 20th century, for use in campaigns set in the Old West. Though descriptions of the Zuni and their land are realistic, there are some suggestions for incorporating the supernatural.

GEOGRAPHY AND LAND USE

Almost all of the Zuni reside on a high plateau just on the New Mexico side of the modern state's border with Arizona, about 150 miles almost due west of Albuquerque. The climate is a near-desert: dry despite a brief rainy season in mid-summer, hot in the summer, and winters with temperatures dipping below freezing but usually without snow. The terrain is modest areas of lightly rolling plains heavily punctuated with steep-sided mesas. In addition, the ground is cut by the course of the Zuni River (a small tributary of the Little Colorado) and numerous arroyos, creek beds that are usually dry but can be quite deep. Where not cultivated, the ground is sparsely covered with tough grasses and low shrubs, with trees (notably pinion pines) on the sides of the mesas.

During the later half of the 19th century, the Zuni are starting a transition from being subsistence farmers to being cattle and sheep ranchers, selling animals to U.S. army forts in the region, so an increasing proportion of their land is used for grazing. However, they still have large areas of "waffle gardens" scattered across the region, where crops are cultivated. In these gardens, growing areas are marked off by low earthen walls. These are in turn subdivided into smaller squares perhaps a yard across, lined with gravel, in which stands of corn, beans, and other crops are grown. These arrangements help moderate temperature, shelter growing plants from harsh winds, capture water during the rainy months, and limit losses to evaporation. Garden areas come in and out of use as the population shifts and changes, and subtle shifts in erosion and water flow patterns make different areas of available land more or less desirable. One can easily find fields more than a day's journey away from the central pueblo.

Maps of the Zuni land can be found on pp. 11-12.

POPULATION AND THE PUEBLO

Though recovering nicely from a history of disease, warfare, and encroachment by other tribes, the Zuni nevertheless number well under 10,000 at this time. Once there were several sizable Zuni settlements, but by the middle of the 19th century, most members of the tribe live in a central pueblo on the banks of the Zuni River, with three much smaller farming villages and many individual homes scattered across the rest of the territory. A number of buildings away from the main villages are temporary residences. They lie closer to the widely scattered fields and are occupied during times of particularly intense planting or harvesting activity. Sometimes, they provide cooler surroundings during the hottest months.

The wood and earthen pueblo consists of a small number of large, sprawling buildings (six of them by the early 20th century), a bit like modern apartment complexes. These buildings are jumbles of rooms stacked, steplike, in tiers. In a typical building, a series of adjacent rooms on the ground floor faces a small maze of alleys and courtyards. Only some of them have doors or windows. Most are reached from above. To enter a room, one must climb a ladder and walk across the roof to a trap door. This set of rooms may have a two-story section behind it, accessed by climbing ladders from the first-floor roofs to reach trap doors in the second-floor roofs. There may be a three-story section beyond that, and so on up to six floors. Only the top room in a stack is accessible from the outside. Those below are entered by ladders from inside the story above. Given the lack of lighting, they're mostly used for storage.

The pueblo's top-down access is primarily a defensive feature, providing limited entrance without the significant expense of dedicated fortifications. This proved suitable for the kinds of warfare the Zuni faced against fellow Native Americans. The nearby mesas had been used defensively in the past when battles against cannon-armed Spaniards required more extreme measures, and some serve as ritual sites, but they are essentially unoccupied now.

Furnishings in the pueblo are sparse. The most notable feature of top-level rooms is a multi-part hearth across one end of the room, separated by a line of stones from the usable floor. This area is typically divided into three parts. The first is a flat stone raised on short pillars. A fire can be built over or under it to heat it up, and when it reaches a suitable temperature, it is swept clean and used as a griddle. The second is a small pit that is similarly heated, then filled and covered to use as an oven. The third is another set of short pillars on which cooking pots might be set with a fire beneath them. The hearth has a shielded flue above it, like a modern range hood but made of wood and possibly plastered with adobe, leading to a short chimney on the roof made from stacked old pots with the bottoms knocked out.

A room may also have a mud-plaster bench along the wall, but except for a few very short stools, most Zuni have little movable furniture. For example, there are no beds, just furs and blankets for sleeping; even hammocks are looked on askance. Rafters and pegs along the walls are used to hang tools and bundles of goods.

Q: What if it rains before the rain dance takes place?
A: It's gonna be a good year.
– A modern Zuni on religious practice

HISTORY

Legends speak of the early tribe traveling from the west and settling in their present surroundings once they learned how to cultivate corn. Whether or not that's true, the Zuni have probably lived in the general vicinity of their current territory for thousands of years, first as hunters and gatherers, then as agriculturalists starting in the first few centuries A.D. They resembled many other Pueblo cultures, relying on corn agriculture and a variety of techniques to maximize use of water in the dry Southwest, constructing large communal adobe buildings, making pottery with elaborate geometric painted decorations, and participating in a religion sharing several gods (Kokopelli and Coyote are the best known) and utilizing kivas (semi-subterranean round buildings). The tribe participated in trade networks stretching across the Southwest and even into California. Since they had no horses and few waterways, most transport was done on foot, though they occasionally used dogs to drag sledges. The modern Zuni pueblo was founded as early as the 13th century, and by the 16th century, the Zuni occupied seven towns that were substantial for the region, if small by European and Asian standards.

The Zuni first encountered explorers from across the Atlantic in 1539, in the form of a small Spanish expedition sent out from Mexico City following rumors of seven cities of gold. It did not go well. One of the explorers, an African slave acting as a scout, was killed by the Zuni for posing a threat, and the expedition found no gold. The first Spanish group was followed a year later by Francisco Coronado, who likewise found no riches but conquered the region anyway. The Spanish claimed authority over the area, established a mission in the early 17th century, and put down the occasional revolt. However, they seem to have had little effect on the Zunis' daily lives. Even persistent attempts to convert the Zuni to Catholicism failed; the mission closed in 1821. Still, warfare and Old World diseases took their toll on the Zuni, as they did on all Native American societies. Though they still occupied their ancestral territories and were never under much more than nominal Spanish governance, substantial Zuni settlements had dwindled to one by the dawn of the 19th century.

Through the 19th century, the Zuni shifted from putting up with the Spanish as the nearest but still distant hegemonic power to putting up with the United States. As the century progressed, U.S. authority became less and less distant. The Zuni first encountered representatives of the U.S. government in 1846 when an expeditionary force visiting neighboring Navajo territories passed through and bought supplies. In 1848, Mexico ceded control of most of the Southwest to the United States.

Since then, relations between the Zuni and the United States have been relatively peaceful. The U.S. government's main interest in the Zuni region is as part of a route by which settlers can reach the West Coast. Most significant contact between the Zuni and the United States has involved the Zuni providing supplies and other assistance to military expeditions and settlers. They have cautiously welcomed a handful of white people into their land as long-term residents: a few teachers, missionaries, and scholars. One of the odder encounters involved an 1857 trail-blazing expedition through Zuni territory and into California by an experimental unit of camel cavalry; unfortunately, the reaction of the Zuni is not well-documented.

During the late 19th century, the Zuni are probably more concerned with relations with their neighbors – the Apache, Hopi, and Navajo – than with the U.S. government. These relations with other Native Americans have been volatile, with raiding all around. Indeed, the Zuni provided troops and intelligence to the United States during wars against the Navajo.

However, not everything is rosy. Conflicts have occurred over growing encroachment on traditionally Zuni territories. There have been some efforts by white people to acquire desirable Zuni lands, and the U.S. government has resettled other Native Americans into nominally Zuni territory as well. Some of the teachers and missionaries have also attempted to "reform" the "barbarous" Indians, pushing them to adopt different clothing and customs. The Zuni have generally resisted, but white culture is slowly making inroads. The Zuni have little reason to fear physical extinction, but they might wonder if their descendants will remember their long-defended ancient ways.

CULTURE AND DAILY LIFE

Many aspects of Zuni culture are alien to visiting whites of the period. Understanding their culture also may give hints to others of life in extended families, small towns, and less complex societies.

NAMES AND LANGUAGE

The Zuni name for themselves is Ashiwi (*Ah*-she-we), which simply means "people." The name Zuni is probably a Spanish mispronunciation of an Acoma Indian word. The Zuni language is an isolate. That is, it appears to be unique, without any known related languages. However, contact with other peoples means that there are a number of bilingual people in the region. Zuni are most likely to know other native languages from the Pueblo region or Spanish, with English becoming more common as time goes by.

Zuni individuals have a formal name given by their parents or clan. However, they are quick to assign nicknames derived from some notable event in the past of the person being named. Some Zuni use a Spanish or English name with outsiders, both as a convenience to visitors and because one's personal Zuni name is regarded as something close to sacred and not to be shared with strangers unnecessarily. Among themselves, the Zuni are more likely to address one another by relationships or age classifications (grandfather, young lady, etc.) than a personal name.

Ladies, Gentlemen, Etc.

In addition to men and women, the Zuni recognize another gender role. Lhamanas are known to be one sex, but take on aspects of other genders. A male lhamana might wear women's clothes and practice pottery and weaving, while a female lhamana might wear men's clothes and participate in overwhelmingly male kachina societies. They appear to be able to marry as they please. This puzzled people in the United States, who were scandalized to discover that an "Indian princess" who visited Washington as part of a Zuni delegation was male.

FAMILY

The Zuni are divided into a little under 20 clans named after various items from nature: turkey, badger, sun, tobacco, and so on. The Zuni are nominally matrilineal, in that clan membership is inherited from one's mother. However, almost the only import of clan membership is that one must marry outside of one's mother's clan (marrying someone in one's father's clan is discouraged, but not prohibited). Clans have their own minor priests and occasional religious rituals, but in most other matters, household membership and direct blood relationships are far more important organizing principles for day-to-day activity.

The tribe is also matrilocal. Once married, and if they don't build a new home right away, men move in with their wife's family. Extended families are the rule as long as there's room: an old married couple, their unmarried sons, their married daughters and their husbands, and even grandchildren may all live in the same large room. Homes are regarded as women's property. Should a couple divorce (not an uncommon occurrence), the man leaves the home in his ex-wife's possession as a matter of course. Fields are a man's property, but harvested crops are typically turned over to his wife for management.

INDUSTRIES

In addition to their main agricultural industries of ranching and subsistence farming, the Zuni grow cotton and tobacco. Although they do own some oxen, horses, and burros, such animals are used mostly for transportation; digging sticks and similar agricultural tools are used more often than animal-drawn plows. They also practice a number of craft industries, mostly for their own benefit but sometimes for sale or trade to others.

The Zuni weave cloth from cotton and sometimes wool. Their fabric is traditionally a twill weave, sometimes decorated with geometrically patterned embroidery. Sewing is typically done with a sharp sliver of yucca, with a cotton thread adhering to rough spines on its side. However, metal needles are being adopted as well.

An important craft industry distantly related to weaving is basket-making. The Zuni produce a wide variety of baskets, used for long-term storage, carrying loads (often balanced on top of the carrier's head or on the carrier's back with an additional strap around the head), serving food, and so on.

They also produce low-fired pottery. The Zuni do not use pottery wheels. Rather, they press clay into a basket as a form or roll out long strands of wet clay and coil them into an approximation of the desired shape. Once the shape has been roughed out, finer pieces are smoothed. Pieces meant to retain water are treated with a glaze made of cactus juice and pinion gum. Pottery-making is almost exclusively women's work (the same is true of the task of quarrying stones, primarily for cooking surfaces).

The Zuni have a long tradition of making jewelry, notably carving semi-precious stones such as jet and turquoise into animal-shaped religious objects. They would be offended by offers to buy objects produced with ritual use in mind, but entirely comfortable to accept commissions for similarly themed custom work. They create with metal as well. Zuni metal jewelry was almost exclusively copper and tin until the 1870s, at which point they started dealing with silver as well.

CUISINE

Corn, wheat, beans, squashes, and chilies are the most important foodstuffs. Peaches, melons, and a kind of licorice are favorite treats. Pine nuts picked from pinion trees are a minor dietary staple. Meat is most often beef, mutton, or venison; though meat is becoming more available, the Zuni still treat it as though it were rare. The Zuni sometimes supplement their diet with hunting and gathering wild foods, such as deer, birds, insects, and wild fungus.

Meals are often served with salt, ground chili, and a paste made of onion, cilantro, and chili. The Zuni consume a number of familiar Southwestern foods, such as tamales and posole (a stew made with hominy), as well as native specialties like a stuffed sheep stomach sausage vaguely resembling haggis. The popular modern Native American food frybread, however, has only recently been invented and is still largely a Navajo dish.

But the Zuni diet revolves around corn, of which they grow several varieties. Corn is eaten in a remarkable array of forms: roasted whole or as kernels, popped, baked into cakes, boiled into porridge or dumplings, left outside in winter to make a sort of corn sherbet, and on and on. For most uses, it is ground into meal using a flat or basin-shaped grindstone (a *metate*) with another hand-held stone (a *mano*). Most households have at least three metates providing different degrees of fineness.

Corn might be chemically altered as well. It may be treated with lime to give it a blue or green tint, colored red with a dye derived from amaranth flowers, softened with an alkaline solution to cook up in soft pillows, or held in the mouth of the cook to sweeten it (enzymes in saliva break starches into sugars) before cooking. The Zuni even make a faintly alcoholic beverage by soaking sprouted corn kernels for a few days.

One of the Zunis' most common staple foods is a flatbread called *he'we*. Cornmeal is boiled with constant stirring, like grits or polenta. This gruel is mixed with another batter made with uncooked meal, and a thin layer of the mixture is spread on a hot stone to cook quickly.

Most cooking is done indoors on the hearth. However, large quantities of food are sometimes baked outside in beehive-shaped clay ovens or pits dug for the purpose. Likewise, the climate makes drying food an excellent form of preservation.

Fashion

Between the climate and the level of technology, the Zuni traditionally don't wear much clothing or particularly tailored garments. Men typically wear a bit of cloth or soft leather around the waist, like a kilt or breechclout, and sometimes a poncho-like tunic. Women usually wear a *manta*, a blanket-like cloth worn like a sari or toga, wrapped around the body with one shoulder bare, and possibly a shawl worn over the shoulders and knotted at the neck. Colder weather or fancier dress means more layers of blankets.

Clothing from outside is starting to make some inroads. A few men wear shirts acquired from the United States and Mexico, and women are occasionally pressured by missionaries to wear shifts under their mantas for modesty's sake.

The most common footwear are soft leather moccasins or sandals made of yucca fiber. Other Zuni fashions include pierced ears (traditionally performed with a porcupine quill) and a bandanna or sash worn around the head. Many grow their hair long, wearing it in a twisted bun or simply loose.

Recreations

The chief Zuni sport is the kicked-stick race. Two teams of runners, at least six on either side, are each provided with a small, distinctively painted stick. The goal for each team is to get their stick across a finish line first, moving it only by kicking. The race course is comparable to that of a marathon, so these competitions take hours.

Another common game is striking a corn-husk-and-feather shuttlecock into the air with a bare hand. The object of the game is to see who can keep it airborne the longest. The Zuni also play games of chance and guessing games (for example, guessing which of a number of containers holds a ball), with related wagering.

The Zuni are avid tobacco smokers. Smoking is common and often done socially, filling a role similar to social drinking in Old World societies. The Zuni roll cigarettes with sections of corn husk, which they neatly tear to the desired size. Tobacco is then scraped into the husk from a compacted plug with a fingernail, a tedious process, and lit with a bit of burning wood.

Cardinal Points

Round numbers mean something different to the Zuni than to whites. For example, they divide the world into six cardinal directions, not just four: north, south, east, west, up, and down. Each is associated with a color: yellow, red, white, blue, rainbow or a speckled mix of colors, and black.

As in many Native American and some East Asian groups, four is a significant number where Indo-Europeans would prefer three. Where whites might use three repetitions of something or divide things into three parts (left, right and center; click your heels together three times), Zuni will do things by fours.

Temperament and Manners

Unlike the stereotype of taciturn natives, the Zuni are downright chatty, with little or no social restriction on who may converse (for example, men and women may speak to one another freely, and children are not expected to be silent until spoken to). There are frequent interruptions between speakers during a conversation. Non-threatening visitors are greeted in the regular Zuni fashion, a sort of handshake that involves breathing on one another's hands, and may find themselves the object of great curiosity. The Zuni practice generous hospitality with visitors, feeding them as much food as they can manage; it's rare that one shows up at a Zuni's home without being given something to eat. It is considered polite for guests to belch loudly and complain of overeating to the point of pain.

However, the Zuni are not unthinking pushovers. They are acutely aware of their rights (or perceived rights) among themselves and strike notoriously hard bargains when it comes to trade. They're also fiercely protective of the purity of their religious rituals, and will go to great lengths to distract and intimidate those who might interfere with them.

Zuni visitors expect to be asked in when they present themselves at a doorway of a home, or will just come in uninvited if they know the residents well. However, they are very roundabout when stating their purpose. If a Zuni has come for a particular purpose, he won't say what it is unless asked, even if he must prompt his host to ask him. If one person is sent by a third party to summon someone else, he won't supply a reason nor expect to be asked.

RELIGION AND GOVERNMENT

The stunningly complex and indifferently codified Zuni religion has been remarkably resistant to outside influences, despite centuries of visits by Catholic missionaries, followed in the 19th century by Protestants and Mormons. Their religion might be crudely described as animism, in that just about every object and phenomenon is imputed with spirit. The Zuni have a great many religious societies and priestly orders devoted to entities representing natural phenomena and social concepts: a sun father, an earth mother, a separate sky god and corn mother, salt, fertility, war, hunting, the ghosts of dead ancestors, spirits representing the bear, the cactus, and the badger, and so on. The priesthoods are, technically, secret societies, in that they have secrets that are revealed only to initiates. However, the existence of any given society is well-known, and most are not difficult to become members of. There is a great deal of overlap between societies, and no formal limit on how many each person may belong to.

Most people participate in at least one of the dozen or so medicine societies, each relying on the aid of its particular patron spirit, and frequently specializing in different illnesses (respiratory complaints, digestive problems, etc.). The bulk of their work is concerned with healing, through rituals and herbal medicines. New members volunteer after being cured of an illness by an order. Illness is often thought to be the result of witchcraft, so in addition to generating new religious initiates, sicknesses sometimes generate accusations of sorcery.

There are likewise about a dozen priestly societies associated with rain-making. These have hereditary membership, focused around the matrilineal families charged with keeping certain sacred objects safe. These societies are busiest in early summer, when they go on solitary retreats, then perform a major dance ceremony to bring the rain.

All men at some point also join a kiva or kachina society, the most visible manifestations of Zuni religion. The kachinas don elaborate masks and costumes representing animals, phenomena in the sky, spirits of the dead, and various other entities to perform a variety of spectacular group dances. These ceremonies are intended to ensure fertility, good planting, good weather, and the good will of dead ancestors. Women are sometimes allowed to join kachina societies, but this is quite rare.

The few priestly orders that only accept men are the hunter cult and the bow priests. The former, not surprisingly, performs rituals to placate the spirits of game and ensure good hunting. The latter are priests of the Zuni's twin war gods. The bow priesthood is ideally limited to those who can demonstrate having killed a man in battle, the evidence for which is usually the enemy's scalp. But during the relatively peaceful later years of the 19th century, candidates for the priesthood might borrow a scalp from someone else or perform other substitutions.

Even apart from the society, religion and magic permeate most everyday activities. Before eating, the Zuni recite a prayer and toss a morsel of food into the cooking fire or away on the ground as a small sacrifice. Significant industrial undertakings like quarrying stone or firing pottery are preceded by fasting and prayers. Silence is required for some tasks, or at least only speaking in Zuni rather than foreign languages.

Zuni religious practice is based on the performance of rituals. They do not practice ecstatic rites, use hallucinogens, or otherwise engage in consciousness-altering. Rather, they keep a body of knowledge about the correct rituals to deal with the forces of nature.

Although many ceremonies are carried out in public, the Zuni can be touchy about outsiders at their rituals, concerned that they will disrupt or defile the ceremonies or interfere with ceremonial objects. They particularly frown on attempts to reproduce or capture details of their ceremonies. This applies not just to photography and making sound recordings, but even to making sketches and taking written notes.

Religion shades into politics. Inasmuch as the Zuni govern themselves, mostly a matter of reaching a consensus rather than legislators issuing decrees, they are ruled by a council of senior priests from all of the major societies. The council selects the bow priests, who act as judicial and executive officers and select an overall governor. Tenure as governor is wildly variable. From 1830 to 1875, with some brief interruptions, it was held by one man, known to outsiders as Pedro Pino. After him, some governors served for up to 10 years, and some for mere months, with most serving for three or four years at a stretch.

When it comes to keeping order and preventing crime, the Zuni rely heavily on social pressure (they are capable of epic taunting) and less on levying fines to the almost complete exclusion of force. Pain is inflicted for ritual purification (spiky yucca sticks are frequently used) and sometimes to prompt testimony from a reticent accused criminal, but rarely for punishment. Even in "capital" cases, exile is a far more frequent punishment.

Priests act as judges to mediate disputes. Many judicial hearings are run by one or two important priests, usually in the presence of a council of other elders. These can be unstructured affairs, with contending parties shouting at one another, the judges shouting at them to be quiet and speak one at a time, and interruptions to fetch witnesses as they become necessary.

The bow priests claim exclusive jurisdiction over one of Zuni's few capital crimes: witchcraft. When execution is called for, the culprit is spirited away and the body disposed of secretly.

Though not a very warlike people, the Zuni fight if sufficiently provoked. They have a particular grudge against the Navajo and the Spanish, and at various points in more recent history, they appeared quite ready to fight outside law enforcement to maintain the right to handle local criminal cases on their own.

Their traditional weapons are wooden war clubs and bows. Arrows have stone points, often made from a speckled chert found in the region. The stone is frequently heat-treated to relieve tensions within the stone, changing its natural brown-to-orange colors into a peculiar purple. However, the Zuni are also happy to adopt guns when they become available.

Religion permeates most activities.

Now, although Átahsaia was ugly and could not talk without chattering his teeth, or laugh without barking like a wolf, he was a very polite demon. But, like many ugly and polite people nowadays, he was a great liar.

– Frank Hamilton Cushing, **Zuñi Folk Tales**

MAGIC AND MYTH

Even in a fantasy world, the Zuni would be unlikely to practice spectacular magic, hurling bolts of fire and the like. After all, they frown on sorcery, regarding "magician" as an insult. Inasmuch as they engage in magical activities, they're of a gentle and clearly benevolent nature. If using **GURPS Magic,** Zuni magical practitioners would limit themselves to Animal, Healing, Plant, Protection and Warning, and Weather colleges, using the spells sparingly and frequently casting them ceremonially. If using Ritual Path magic, all rituals produce lesser effects.

Zuni myths and legends feature a number of recognizable monsters and magical items. Here are two.

K'IA-ALLAN

This is a mystical water shield provided to the twin war gods when they went to guide the first people out of darkness and into the world. It acts as a medium shield in combat, but it can do much more. The user can stand on it and use it to fly at Move 10. It also allows the user to control mists and clouds as though he had Control 20 (Mists and Clouds).

ATAHSAIA

267 points

Atahsaia is a monster out of Zuni legend. Though more or less human shaped, he's huge and fearsome, with shaggy hair, a spiky chest, bulging eyes, ferocious teeth and claws, and huge weapons. He was known for killing and eating people and his fearsome war cry of "Hoothlaia!" but was eventually outsmarted by Coyote, the trickster god.

ST 23 [130]; **DX** 12 [40]; **IQ** 10 [0]; **HT** 13 [30].

Damage 2d+1/4d+1; BL 106 lbs.; HP 23 [0]; Will 10 [0]; Per 10 [0]; FP 13 [0].
Basic Speed 6.25 [0]; Basic Move 6 [0]; Dodge 9; Parry 11 (Brawling) or 10 (Shortsword); Block 10.
1,300 lbs., SM +1.

Advantages
Peripheral Vision [15]; Sharp Claws [5]; Sharp Teeth [1]; Short Spines [1].

Disadvantages
Monstrous [-20]; Odious Personal Habit (Cannibal) [-15].

Skills
Area Knowledge (Zuni region) (E) IQ+3 [8]-13; Bow (A) DX+3 [12]-15; Brawling (E) DX+4 [12]-16; Cloak (A) DX+2 [8]-14; Fast Draw (Arrow) (E) DX+2 [4]-14; Shortsword (A) DX+3 [12]-15; Stealth (A) DX+3 [12]-15; Survival (Desert) (A) IQ+3 [12]-13.

Notes
Though he won't be getting a Ph.D. any time soon, Atahsaia isn't a mindless brute, either. He's as clever as the average person, even if he puts his intelligence to use in murder. He's also armed with these items:

Arrows ×20 (p. B276) **[Quiver]** $60, 3 lbs.
Leather Heavy Cloak (**Fantasy-Tech 1,** p. 12) **[Torso]** DB 2, DR1, -1 to Cloak skill. $200, 20 lbs.
Regular Bow (p. B275) **[Torso]** 2d+3 imp. $150, 3 lbs.
Shortsword (p. B273) **[Torso]** 4d+2 cut, 2d+2 imp. This blade is solid flint, and probably a bit magical to ensure structural integrity; treat it as a regular steel sword. $600, 3 lbs.

CAMPAIGNS

In many Western campaigns, the land of the Ashiwi can function as a place of at least temporary refuge. Adventurers who are lost or on the run can find, if not friends, then at least people willing to put up with them for a bit and point them in the right direction, even if they do shake their heads sadly at their visitors' foolishness. Nobody will stop a showdown between outsiders in the central plaza of the pueblo (the Zuni usually have the good sense to hide if it's clear that men are set on killing one another – after delivering a good scolding), but maybe an old priest's blessing will do some good.

Zuni also could be the source of adventuring characters. Most Zuni feel closely tied to families and homeland, but exceptional individuals could be coaxed into the wider world for economic reasons or simply by curiosity. Beyond the possibility of seeking personal gain, an adventurer might be traveling on behalf of his people, looking to learn more about commercial opportunities, pick up new skills to transmit to others at home, or act as an emissary working to find friends and political allies.

Adventure Seeds

Here are some more specific suggestions for adventures on and around the Zuni area.

Range War

Although greater exposure to the outside is expanding the scope of the Zunis' world, encroachment on their land is reducing the area over which they have control. The same has been happening to other tribes, who have sometimes responded violently. Significant actions lasted into the 1880s, and individual acts of resistance and revenge even longer. Though generally not violent, a few ugly incidents and persuasive leaders could push the Zuni into war as well. This might mean revolt against U.S. forces, or infighting among Native American groups, like a revival of ancient Zuni-Navajo hostilities. Characters involved might be Federal troops and marshals acting against individual wrongdoers, Bureau of Indian Affairs agents and independent actors such as scholars and missionaries trying to head off hostilities, determined settlers or cattlemen intent on grabbing some land for themselves, and natives either caught in the middle or trying to start some action.

The Great Old Ones

One aspect of Zuni "theology" is that they believe their rituals benefit the whole world, not just their little patch of New Mexico. Maybe they're right. Part of their constant calming of spirits and appealing to a huge number of gods is to keep the stars from lining up in the wrong way and to prevent the monsters who roamed the world in ancient times from returning. The Zuni, or at least a handful of priests, may be targets of mad cultists who have decided to tear off through the uncharted deserts of the Southwest. The adventurers may be lawmen or soldiers charged with stopping these violent men, simply hoping not to provoke a war with one of the few native groups the United States hasn't fought with yet, or sadly enlightened civilians who understand the cultists' true purpose.

Alternatively, a faction within the Zuni may be agitating for a change to their rituals, arguing that the white man is a threat and Washington must be destroyed. Adventurers will have to stop them from carrying the day while not convincing the rest of the Zuni that the anti-Washington faction is right.

The Monster and Old Man Withers

Dead bodies have been found in the Zuni hinterland, ripped open, stripped of most of their flesh, and showing the signs of mauling with huge teeth and claws. Is the culprit a monster of legend returned to life (say, Atahsaia)? Or is it someone who wants it to *look* like there's a monster stalking the land? Perhaps the prospector roaming the hills has found something. Perhaps cattle barons from farther east are after something else. Then again, maybe it *is* a monster. The adventurers are hired, called in by relatives, or otherwise pressed into service to find out.

Further References

Cushing, Frank Hamilton. *My Adventures in Zuni* (The Century Magazine, December 1882, February 1883, and May 1883); *Zuni Folk Tales* (G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1901); and others. Cushing came to Zuni in 1879 and stayed for five years. During that time, he was adopted into the tribe by the governor and became a bow priest. His years as a participant observer make him an important founding figure in American anthropology. Most of Cushing's works are in the public domain and freely available online.

Edaakie, Rita. *Idonapshe: Let's Eat* (Ashiwi Awan Museum and Cultural Center, 1999). The recipes in this book, compiled from modern Zuni home cooks, demonstrate how Zuni foodways have changed since contact. Even traditional recipes may be expressed in modern ways; for example, the recipe for roast corn starts with a pickup-truck load of ears of corn. However, it also includes instructions for using ingredients like locusts and prairie dogs, which were part of historical diets as well.

USGS. The Unites States Geological Survey provides free, detailed topographical maps in electronic format at **usgs.gov.** Their collection includes both contemporary maps with a satellite image overlay and less detailed maps from the 1890s that indicate the position of railway lines, forts, and even water sources. (Search for Gallup rather than Zuni for the oldest maps.) The GM can download these to get a good look at what the terrain of the Zuni area is like.

Many visitors to Zuni over the next four centuries would make the same report – the Zuni were the most hospitable and friendly people they had ever met.

– David Grant Noble,
Zuni and El Morro

About the Author

Matt Riggsby holds degrees in anthropology and archaeology; he spent his first season in the field doing survey and excavation on the Zuni reservation. Like the rest of his generation, he has moved on to a job in computers. He works for an international medical technology company and lives with his wife, who is a member of a different clan, his son, who cheerfully ignores ancestral wisdom, and a pack of dogs, who refuse to carry burdens.

Map of the *Shiwi-na-kwin* (Land of the Zuni)

MAP OF THE MAIN ZUNI SETTLEMENT

0   200

Scale in Feet

OUTLAWS AND ARROWS

BY CHRISTOPHER R. RICE

The Wild West evokes images of gun-toting cowboys, bow-wielding Indians, outlaw gangs, and gunfights at high noon. It's a place where the law is in the hands of a single man. It's a place where sometimes the only rule is the rule of might, where doing what's right and doing what's legal aren't always the same thing. It's a place where "white hat" heroes are loved, and "black hat" villains are feared. It's a place of frontiers and farms, a place of gold and silver mines.

With the following advice, you can now use the **GURPS Action** series for running highly cinematic campaigns during the classical period of the "Wild West" in the American frontier. Sean Punch's *Pulp Action!* in *Pyramid #3/8: Cliffhangers* provided a great deal of inspiration.

EXISTING TEMPLATES

Most of the templates from **GURPS Action 1: Heroes** require some modification to account for societal and technological differences in eras. (See *Other Templates,* p. 14, for unusable character types and for suggestions of additional character possibilities.)

Remove Computer Operation and Driving from background skills, and replace them with an equal number of points in one of the following: Area Knowledge (any), Current Affairs (any), Riding (Horse), Survival, or Teamster (Equines).

Most unarmed skills are typically Boxing and Brawling for striking, and Wrestling for grappling. Other unarmed skills are uncommon. When a template gives a choice between for these types of skills, always select Boxing, Brawling, or Wrestling. The GM may allow players to take Karate or Judo, but some justification should be given, such as "I studied with the Lakota" or "I picked up this move from my time in Singapore."

Finally, TL skills are TL5 as the American "frontier" era is late TL5 with some burgeoning TL6 technology.

ASSASSIN

This template serves more as the "sharpshooter" rather than a killer or hitman (though it can still be that, too!). Skill with a long-range firearm was *vital* in a land where most people hunted for their food. Most assassins have the military or law enforcement lens (**Action 1,** p. 5), though the frontiersman and native lens (pp. 18-19) are also common.

Advantages: Combat Reflexes and Night Vision are must-have traits for most cinematic sharpshooters, while Signature Gear for tricked-out rifles is common. The GM may allow the Gunslinger advantage to have the limitation "Gun Rack, Guns (Rifles) Only" (-40%). This means that the character gains all the benefits of Gunslinger, but *only* while using a firearm that uses the Guns (Rifle) specialty.

Disadvantages: Black hats should keep the mandatory Callous disadvantage. The GM may allow white hats to choose -5 additional points from any of the listed disadvantages instead. Add Code of Honor (Code of the West) [-10] from **GURPS Old West** (p. 31) to the optional background traits.

Primary Skills: Remove Liquid Projector (Squirt Gun) and Guns (Submachine Gun) from the list of traits; add Bow (A) DX-1 [1]-15.

Secondary Skills: Remove Electronics Operation (Security) and Driving (Automobile or Motorcycle) as choices, but add Lockpicking and Traps, both (A) IQ [2]-12 and Riding (Horse) (A) DX [2]-16, as new options.

FACE MAN

Snake-oil salesmen, boomtown mayors, gamblers, and smooth-talking city slickers are all face men specializing in different skills. The "soiled dove" (prostitute) and saloon entertainer are other examples, though the majority of their skills focus on getting men to do what they want (e.g., Sex Appeal and increased Appearance). The GM may prefer to make the femme fatale template from *Pulp Action!* in *Pyramid #3/8* (p. 7) available instead for certain women.

Advantages: Snake-oil salesmen and other silver-tongued individuals will probably want to spend their remaining points to buy Smooth Operator 4. The GM should allow *boomtown mayors* to exchange the Smooth Operator 2 [30] with Intuitive Statesman 3 [30] from **GURPS Power-Ups 3: Talents** (p. 11). This change reduces all primary skills by two levels – except for Diplomacy, Leadership, and Public Speaking, which *go up* one level. It also raises the secondary skill choices of Administration and Propaganda by *three* levels. *Gamblers* can similarly exchange Smooth Operator 2 [30] for Business Acumen 3 [30].

This change reduces all primary skills by two levels – except for Merchant, which goes up one level. It also raises secondary skills Administration, Gambling, and Propaganda by three levels. *Soiled doves* and *saloon entertainers* will want as high an Appearance and Charisma as they can buy. The GM might also allow them to buy the Allure talent from *Power-Ups 3* (p. 6).

Disadvantages: Secret (Past scams) and Greed are required for *snake-oil salesmen*. *City slickers* often have Social Stigma (Criminal Record) or Overconfidence. Compulsive Gambling is common for *gamblers,* as is Compulsive Carousing, Chummy, or Gregarious. *Soiled doves* add Reputation (Fallen woman) to their available disadvantages.

Primary Skills: Boomtown mayors can exchange any of the skills on this list with any of the following: Current Affairs (Headline News, People, *or* Politics) (E) IQ [1]-15; Law (any) (H) IQ-2 [1]-13; or Politics (A) IQ-1 [1]-14; all of which receive +3 from Intuitive Statesman. *Gamblers* replace Merchant and Public Speaking with Gambling (A) IQ [2]-15 (+3 with Business Acumen). *Soiled doves* and *saloon entertainers* should increase their Sex Appeal and Fast-Talk as high as they can, while singers also need appropriate performing arts skills.

Secondary Skills: Snake-oil salesmen will want to put at *least* 7 points into Fast-Talk, raising it from IQ+1 to IQ+4. *Boomtown mayors* will probably want to increase Administration, Politics, and Propaganda. *City slickers* will want Counterfeiting, Forgery, and Smuggling. Most *gamblers* will want to spend more points on Gambling to make it even higher. *Soiled doves* add Professional Skill (Courtesan) (A) IQ-1 [1]-14 to their list of available choices.

INFILTRATOR

Infiltrators are usually professional thieves, but this template, in conjunction with the native lens (pp. 18-19), can also be used to represent scouts who are sneaky, rather than combat oriented. Infiltrators in the Wild West rely more on skills and talent than gear.

Advantages: Scouts need Combat Reflexes and as much Night Vision as they can afford.

Primary Skills: Replace Electronics Operation (Security) with additional points in Lockpicking or Traps. Scouts can spend these 4 points on skills from their lens instead.

Secondary Skills: Remove Boating (Motorboat), Driving, Electronics Repair (Security), Parachuting, Piloting (Glider), Scuba, and Submarine (Free-Flooding Sub) as options. Add Riding (Horse) (A) DX-1 [1]-14 and Animal Handling (Horse) (A) IQ-1 [1]-12 as skill choices.

INVESTIGATOR

From the journalist feeding stories "back East" to Pinkerton agents, this template meshes well with any lens, but law enforcement works especially well when creating lawmen, sheriffs, private detectives, and so on.

Primary Skills: Remove the Electronics Operation (Surveillance) from the skill choices. Add Photography to the list of options.

Secondary Skills: Remove Computer Operation from the skill choices.

MEDIC

Doctors, sawbones, and even veterinarians are a key part of life on the frontier.

Advantages: Add Animal Empathy [5] and Animal Friend 1-4 [5/level] to the list of available choices.

Disadvantages: "Fallen" medics with Secrets about being drug dealers or Social Stigma (License Revoked) are rare. However, those *with* an Addiction to laudanum or morphine are common. Medics that are also part-time veterinarians (or part-time doctors!) tend to have Sense of Duty (Animals) [-10].

Primary Skills: Vets can reduce Physician to IQ+4, placing those points in Veterinary (H) IQ+4 [4]-19 instead.

Secondary Skills: Remove Driving, NBC Suit, Hazardous Materials (Biological), and Piloting as optional skill choices. Add Riding (Horse) (A) DX [2]-12 and Teamster (A) IQ [2]-15 as choices.

SHOOTER

Gunfighter. Shootist. Pistolero. Gunman. Bad Man. *Gunslinger.* This template is key to *Action* campaigns in the Wild West.

Advantages: Increased Basic Speed and Per are essential. Signature Gear for special firearms or firearm-related equipment is common. Shooters who didn't purchase increased Per should at least buy a few levels of Acute Vision. Pistoleros are going to want to buy Ambidexterity. The GM may allow the Gunslinger advantage to have the limitation "Gun Rack, Guns (Pistol) Only" (-40%). This means that the character gains all the benefits of Gunslinger, but *only* while relying on a firearm that uses the Guns (Pistol) specialty.

OTHER TEMPLATES

The cleaner, demolition man, hacker, wheelman, and wire rat are not represented because the technology that the templates are designed around either does not exist or is in its infancy. Of theses templates, only the demolition man *may* be viable, and that depends on the type of campaign the GM is running. If the GM allows a demolition man character, he should probably require the player to choose Explosives (Demolition) as his primary skill package and remove any technological skills that don't exist.

Depending on the campaign, the GM might allow the gadgeteer template from *Pulp Action!* (*Pyramid #3/8: Cliffhangers,* p. 7) or the horseman template from *Extended Action!* (in *Pyramid #3/53: Action,* p. 13).

The big guy, fast guy, and weapon master templates from *GURPS Action 3: Furious Fists* are also usable. For example, the weapon master template can be the basis of cinematic native warriors, while the big guy template might be used to create a hulking railroad worker or a *really* big "Injun."

Disadvantages: Add Code of Honor (Code of the West) [-10] and Code of Honor (Cowboy's) [-10], from **Old West** (p. 31), to the list of optional disadvantages. White hats tend to have Sense of Duty or Honesty. Black hats typically have nasty traits like Bad Temper, Berserk, Bloodlust, Bully, Callous, or Greed.

Primary Skills: Move Acrobatics to the list of skill choices. Add Riding (Horse) (A) DX [2]-16; use the remaining 2 points on any primary skill of choice. Remove the following skill options: Guns (Grenade Launcher, LAW, Light Machine Gun, and Submachine Gun), Gunner (Machine Gun), and Liquid Projector.

Secondary Skills: Remove Driving from the list of options. Add Riding (other) (A) DX-1 [1]-15 and Animal Handling (Horse) (A) IQ-1 [1]-10 as skill choices.

NEW TEMPLATES

The following are new templates for **Action** characters in a Wild West campaign.

MOUNTAIN MAN

250 points

I have never been lost, but I will admit to being confused for several weeks.

– Daniel Boone

Hunting and skinning. Fishing and trapping. *Surviving.* From the wide-open spaces and forests to the mountains and rivers, you're the expert. You're the key man in any squad that plans to go on the lam, travel through wilderness, etc. This template can also be used to represent cinematic tribesman.

Attributes: ST 12 [20]; DX 12 [40]; IQ 12 [40]; HT 12 [20].

Secondary Characteristics: Damage 1d-1/1d+2; BL 29 lbs.; HP 12 [0]; Will 12 [0]; Per 16 [20]; FP 12 [0]; Basic Speed 6.00 [0]; Basic Move 6 [0].

Advantages: Higher Purpose (Survivor!) [5†], Outdoorsman 4 [40], *and* Luck [15]. ● A further 30 points chosen from among lens advantages (**Action 1,** pp. 4-5), ST +1 to +3 [10/level], DX +1 [20], IQ +1 [20], HT +1 to +3 [10/level], HP +1 to +6 [2/level], Perception +1 to +4 [5/level], Will +1 to +4 [5/level], FP +1 to +6 [3/level], Basic Speed +1.00 [20], Basic Move +1 to +3 [5/level], Absolute Direction [5] *or* 3D Spatial Sense [10], Absolute Timing [2], Acute Senses (any) [2/level], Animal Empathy [5], Animal Friend 1-4 [5/level], Breath-Holding [2/level], Combat Reflexes [15], Damage Resistance 1-2 (Tough Skin, -40%) [3 or 6], Danger Sense [15], Fearlessness 1-7 [2/level] *or* Unfazeable [15], Fit [5] *or* Very Fit [15], Green Thumb 1-4 [5/level], Hard to Kill 1-4 [2/level], Hard to Subdue 1-4 [2/level], High Manual Dexterity 1-4 [5/level], High Pain Threshold [10], Night Vision 1-9 [1/level], Resistant to Disease (+3) *or* (+8) [3 or 5], Resistant to Poison (+3) *or* (+8) [5 or 8], Silence 1-2 [5 or 10], Single-Minded [5], Temperature Tolerance 1-6 [1/level], Terrain Adaptation (any) [5], Versatile [5], or replace Luck [15] with Extraordinary Luck [30] for 15 points.

Disadvantages: Loner (12) [-5] *or* Compulsive Explorer (12) [-5‡]. ● -15 points chosen from among Bad Temper [-10*], Bloodlust [-10*], Callous [-5], Charitable [-15*], Clueless [-10], Curious [-5*], Hidebound [-5], Intolerance (City slickers) [-5] *or* Total Intolerance (Classist) [-10], Selfish [-5*], or decrease the self-control roll for Loner or Compulsive Explorer to 9, for -2 points, or 6, for -5 points. ● A further -30 points chosen from among the previous traits or On The Edge [-15*], Overconfidence [-5*], Phobia (Crowds) [-15*], Sense of Duty (Teammates, Animals, Plants, *or* Nature) [-5 to -15], Social Stigma (Barbarian) [-10], Stubbornness [-5], Vow (Vegetarianism) [-5], or Wealth (Struggling *or* Poor) [-10 or -15].

Primary Skills: Camouflage (E) IQ+5 [2]-17§; Fishing (E) Per+5 [2]-21§; Naturalist (H) IQ+3 [2]-15§; Navigation (Land) (A) IQ+4 [2]-16§; Stealth (A) DX+1 [4]-13; Survival (any) (A) Per+4 [2]-20§; Tracking (A) Per+5 [2]-21§; *and* Weather Sense (A) IQ+4 [2]-16§. ● *One* of Mimicry (Birdcalls *or* Animal Sounds) (H) IQ+3 [2]-15§. ● *One* of Bow (A) DX+1 [4]-13; or Guns (Musket *or* Rifle) (E) DX+2 [4]-14; or Spear (A) DX [2]-12 *and* Thrown Spear (E) DX+1 [2]-13. ● *One* of Hiking (A) HT [2]-12 or Riding (Horse) (A) DX [2]-12.

Secondary Skills: *One* of Boxing (A) DX [2]-12 or Brawling (A) DX+1 [2]-13. ● *Twelve* of Fast-Draw (Pistol *or* Long Arm), Guns (Musket, Pistol, Rifle, *or* Shotgun), Jumping, Knife, Knot-Tying, Leatherworking, or Thrown Weapon (any), all (E) DX+1 [2]-13; Boating (Unpowered), Climbing, Staff, Throwing, or Wrestling, all (A) DX [1]-12; Area Knowledge (any wilderness area), First Aid, or Gardening, all (E) IQ+1 [2]-13; Armoury/TL0 (Melee or Missile Weapons), Cartography, Falconry, Packing, Teamster, or Traps, all (A) IQ [2]-12; Navigation (Air *or* Sea) (A) IQ+4 [2]-16§; Geography (Physical), Pharmacy/TL0 (Herbal), or Veterinary, all (H) IQ-1 [2]-11; Carousing or Swimming, both (E) HT+1 [1]-13; Intimidation (A) Will [2]-12; Scrounging (E) Per [1]-16; Survival (any) (A) Per [2]-20§; or 2 points to raise one of those skills by a level or spend those points to raise a primary skill.

Background Skills: Choose a 20-point lens (pp. 18-19 and **Action 1,** pp. 4-5).

* Multiplied for self-control number; see p. B120.

† Gives +1 to all rolls made to survive in the wilds, active defense or DX rolls to avoid hazards, HT rolls to endure inclement weather, and so on.

‡ Failed self-control roll means you must try to map out an area you've never been before, take the more dangerous road if you haven't been that way, and so on.

§ Includes +4 from Outdoorsman Talent.

Customization Notes

Most mountain men can operate in a range of environments, but some specialize. Players should keep this in mind when creating their characters. Additionally, unlike some of the templates from **Action 1,** the mountain man template doesn't have high statistics (14 or higher).

This is intentional; operating on your own in the wild requires multiple disciplines and attracts a certain kind of person.

Criminal: Poachers, men on the lam, bushwhackers, and bandits all fit this lens quite well. Points should be spent on increasing combat skills and Stealth.

Frontiersman (p. 18): This lens is a perfect fit for a mountain man, increasing their already robust knowledge of the wilderness even further.

Intelligence, Security: These lenses are usually incompatible with mountain men, except for the possibility of ex-spies or ex-spy hunters.

Law Enforcement: This lens might be appropriate for distant frontier towns or ex-lawmen that have fled civilization for the wilds. It could also be used for the Texas Rangers and similar organizations.

Military: The Army used scouts and trackers all the time as they pushed their way into the frontier. Points should be spent on combat skills and increased Stealth.

Native (pp. 18-19): The original mountain men were taught what they knew by the indigenous tribes so it's not too far a stretch for this lens. Like the frontiersmen lens, it turns the already wilderness-savvy mountain man into the ultimate outdoorsman.

PREACHER

250 points

The Lord is my Shepherd; I shall not want.

– Psalms 23:1

You're a man of God. In the Wild West, this is usually the Christian God, but this template can also represent native medicine men, Sikh gurus, and so on. You serve some of the same roles as investigator and face man, but you're no detective or con man. People tell you things because they *trust* you. Scam artists who hide under the precepts of religion should use the face man template instead, spending points from quirks on Religious Ritual, Theology, etc.

Attributes: ST 10 [0]; DX 12 [40]; IQ 14 [80]; HT 12 [20].
Secondary Characteristics: Damage 1d-2/1d; BL 20 lbs.; HP 10 [0]; Will 16 [10]; Per 16 [10]; FP 12 [0]; Basic Speed 6.00 [0]; Basic Move 6 [0].
Advantages: Charisma 2 [10] *and* Clerical Investment [5]. ● *One* of Luck [15] *or* Serendipity 1 [15]. ● *One* of Hellfire-and-Brimstone Preacher 4 (p. 17) [20], Good Shepherd 4 (p. 17) [20], or Medicine Man 4 (p. 17) [20], or spend 20 points in appropriate advantages for faith. ● 30 points chosen from among lens advantages (*Action 1,* pp. 4-5), ST +1 or +2 [10 or 20], DX +1 [20], IQ +1 [20], HT +1 or +2 [10 or 20], Will +1 to +4 [5/level], Alcohol Tolerance [1], Charisma 3-6 [5/level], Contact Group (Congregation, Church elders, etc.; Skill-12, 15, *or* 18; 9 or less; Somewhat Reliable) [5, 10, or 15], Fearlessness 1-7 [2/level] or Unfazeable [15], Higher Purpose [5], Intuition [15], Resistant to Influence Skills (+3 or +8) [5 or 7] *or* Indomitable [15], Language Talent [10], Languages (any) [2-6/language], No Hangover [1], Religious Rank [5/level], Sensitive [5] *or* Empathy [15], Serendipity 2-3 [15/level], Voice [10], or replace Luck [15] with Extraordinary Luck [30] for 15 points.
Disadvantages: *One* of Disciplines of Faith (Ritualism) [-5], Odious Personal Habit (Fire-and-brimstone preaching)

[-5], Sense of Duty (Flock *or* Tribe) [-5], or -5 points in appropriate disadvantages for faith. ● -30 points chosen from among Charitable [-15*], Compulsive Behavior (Religious Observance) [-5*], Compulsive Generosity [-5*], Compulsive Proselytizing [-10*], Disciplines of Faith [-5 to -15], Fanaticism (Faith, Cause, Ethnicity, etc.) [-15], Intolerance (Religious) [-5 or -10], Odious Personal Habit [-5 to -15], Obsession (Convert all godless heathens) [-5* or -10*], or Pacifism [-5 to -30]. ● A further -15 points chosen from either of the previous lists or Honesty [-10*], No Sense of Humor [-10], Overconfidence [-5*], Sense of Duty (Coreligionists, All humanity, *or* All Creation) [-10, -15, or -20], Stubbornness [-5], Truthfulness [-5*], Vow [-5 to -15], or Wealth (Struggling *or* Poor) [-10 or -15].
Primary Skills: *One* of the following packages:

1. *Hellfire-and-Brimstone Preacher:* Body Language (A) Per+4 [2]-20†; Detect Lies (H) Per+3 [2]-19†; Intimidation (A) Will+4 [2]-20†; Public Speaking (A) IQ+6 [2]-20†‡; Religious Ritual (Abrahamic) (H) IQ+3 [2]-17†; *and* Theology (Abrahamic) (H) IQ+3 [2]-17†.
2. *Good Shepherd:* Diplomacy (H) IQ+3 [2]-17§; Leadership (A) IQ+6 [2]-20‡§; Propaganda (A) IQ+4 [2]-18§; Public Speaking (A) IQ+6 [2]-20‡§; Religious Ritual (Abrahamic) (H) IQ+3 [2]-17§; *and* Theology (Abrahamic) (H) IQ+3 [2]-17§.
3. *Medicine Man:* Esoteric Medicine (Animism) (H) Per+3 [2]-19¶; Fortune-Telling (Augury *or* Dream Interpretation) (A) IQ+6 [2]-20‡; Meditation (H) Will+3 [2]-19¶; Pharmacy (Herbal) (H) IQ+3 [2]-17¶; Public Speaking (A) IQ+6 [2]-20‡; *and* Religious Ritual (Animism) (H) IQ+3 [2]-17¶.
4. Spend 12 points on appropriate skills for faith.

Secondary Skills: Guns (Pistol *or* Rifle) (E) DX+1 [2]-13. ● *One* of Boxing (A) DX [2]-12 or Brawling (A) DX+1 [2]-13. ● *Eleven* of Fast-Draw (Pistol *or* Long Arm) or Knife, both (E) DX+1 [2]-13; Dancing, Filch, Stealth, or Wrestling all (A) DX [2]-12; Sleight of Hand (H) DX-1 [2]-11; Area Knowledge, Current Affairs, First Aid, or Savoir-Faire (High Society *or* Servant), all (E) IQ+1 [2]-15; Acting, Administration, Hidden Lore (Church Secrets and Tricks), Interrogation, Leadership, Propaganda, Research, or Teaching, all (A) IQ [2]-14; Diplomacy, History, Law (Canon *or* Liturgical), Literature, or Psychology, all (H) IQ-1 [2]-13; Carousing (E) HT+1 [2]-13; Intimidation (A) Will [2]-16; Body Language (A) Per [2]-16; Detect Lies or Esoteric Medicine, both (H) Per-1 [2]-15; or 2 points to raise one of those skills by a level or spend those points to raise a primary skill.
Background Skills: Choose a 20-point lens (pp. 18-19 and *Action 1,* pp. 4-5). ● *One* of Riding (Horse) (A) DX [2]-12 or Teamster (Horse) (A) IQ [2]-14.

* Multiplied for self-control number; see p. B120.
† Includes +4 from Hellfire-and-Brimstone Preacher Talent.
‡ Includes +2 from Charisma.
§ Includes +4 from Good Shepherd Talent.
¶ Includes +4 from Medicine Man Talent.

Customization Notes

There are three different "types" of preacher: *hellfire and brimstone* (who talks of wrath, punishment for the unjust, and the repentance of sin), the *good shepherd* (who preaches love, helping the poor and downtrodden, and tolerance), and the native *medicine man* (or shaman).

The GM might also allow other religions to make use of this template; in some alternate-history or **GURPS Infinite Worlds** campaigns, Buddhist monks, Shinto priests, Hindu gurus, and the like might be common.

There's plenty of variety within these broad types.

Criminal: Disgraced (or, rarely, excommunicated) men of faith sent out into the frontier to do God's work is a common trope. Most are of the hellfire-and-brimstone variety, often for "extreme" teachings. Disgraced preachers tend to focus on the social skills from this lens and their template, and spending points on Contacts.

Frontiersman (p. 19): As needed as the medic for boom- or cow towns, frontier preachers tend to end up in leadership positions.

Intelligence: When everyone tells you their sins, putting that information to use as a spy might seem a perfect marriage . . . as long as your parishioners don't find out. Points are often spent in mental skills like Smuggling, Intelligence Analysis, Forgery, etc.

Law Enforcement: Wearing multiple hats in a small community is a common thing, so preachers might end up ministering the laws of God *and* man. Hellfire and brimstone preachers make *excellent* sheriffs, marshals, and the like.

Military: Preachers can serve as chaplains in the Army, administering and fighting alongside their flock. Medicine men who accompany war bands are also possible.

Native (pp. 18-19): Medicine men can vary vastly from tribe to tribe, but most all of them act as a guide or conduit to the spirit world and as an influential leader in any decisions for the tribe. Adventurers tend to be "spirit-talkers," on a specific quest, or wandering guides who seek out those who need their help (even if they don't know they need it!). In some games, the GM may even allow Esoteric Medicine to act as (or even better than) First Aid.

Security: Preachers who are counterspies are about as common as those who are spies. Pinkerton agents who became missionaries as part of a cover or recruited for that reason are also possible. Observation and Psychology are go-to skills when trying to ferret out a spy in a particular community, and Interrogation actually helps when you find them.

PREACHER TALENTS

The following new talents are available for preacher characters. For an explanation of Alternative Benefit and Alternative Cost, see **GURPS Power-Ups 3: Talents.**

Good Shepherd Talent

see p. B89

Diplomacy, Leadership, Propaganda, Public Speaking, Religious Ritual (Abrahamic), and Theology (Abrahamic).

Reaction Bonus: Your flock, members of your faith, those sympathetic to it, etc.

Alternative Benefit: +1/level to the first Influence roll (p. B359) of any kind made on an audience member (or several of them as a group) after a *successful* homily, sermon, and so on.

Alternative Cost: 6 points/level.

Notes: This talent may be adapted to other religions, simply generalize or replace the required specialty for Religious Ritual and Theology.

Hellfire-and-Brimstone Preacher Talent

see p. B89

Body Language, Detect Lies, Intimidation, Public Speaking, Religious Ritual (Abrahamic), and Theology (Abrahamic).

Reaction Bonus: Anyone who shares your religious views (i.e., judgment, wrath, and so on), Christian fundamentalists, repentant sinners, etc.

Alternative Benefit: +1/level to the first Intimidation Influence roll (p. B359) made on an audience member (or several of them as a group) after a *successful* homily, sermon, and so on *and* +1/level to resist Interrogation, Intimidation, and Fright Checks.

Alternative Cost: 6 points/level.

Notes: This talent may be adapted to other religions, simply generalize or replace the required specialty for Religious Ritual and Theology.

Medicine Man Talent

see p. B89

Esoteric Medicine (Animism), Fortune-Telling (Augury or Dream Interpretation), Meditation, Pharmacy (Herbal), Public Speaking, Religious Ritual (Animism).

Reaction Bonus: Coreligionists, other medicine men, shamans, etc.

Alternative Benefit: +1/level of Medicine Man when using skills to fool others into believing you have mystical abilities, can speak to spirits, etc.

Alternative Cost: 6 points/level.

Notes: This talent assumes that the campaign has no supernatural elements and may not be appropriate for campaigns that do.

EXISTING LENSES

The man of science lens from *Pulp Action!* (*Pyramid #3/8*, p. 5) works for mad scientists. The backwoodsman, kid, and masked avenger lenses from *Extended Action!* (*Pyramid #3/53*, p. 13) might be useful depending on the campaign type. Famous examples of the masked avenger in a Wild West setting include The Lone Ranger and Zorro.

Some of the existing lenses from **Action 1** require modification:

Criminal: This lens works well for outlaws, thieves, cattle-rustlers and so on. Add Animal Handling (any) (A) IQ [2] and Survival (any) (A) Per [2].

Intelligence: This lens is rare. Most spies are "back East." The GM might allow disgraced or ex-spies to find their way into the frontier though.

Law Enforcement: Remove Accounting, Liquid Projector (Sprayer), and Tonfa from the list of skill choices. Add Intimidation (A) Will [2] and Animal Handling (Horse) (A) IQ [2]. Skill in either Criminology or Forensics will be rare, but possible. Add Ally (Posse) and Reputation (Lawman) to the list of social traits.

Military: Remove NBC Suit, Parachuting, Scuba, and Submariner from the list of skill choices. Add Animal Handling (Horse) (A) IQ [2], and Broadsword and Riding (Horse), both (A) DX [2].

New Lenses

The following are new lenses for **Action** characters in a Wild West campaign.

Pack your Wild West adventures with action!

Frontiersman

20 points

Life on the frontier is hard, where you need to be ready for anything and be able to do anything. Most characters with this lens are woodsman, guides, cowboys, or have lived most of their lives on the edge of civilization. Thematically, this lens is similar to *Backwoodsman* (*Pyramid #3/53: Action,* p. 11), but is less about being able to survive in the wild and more about being competent on one's own for extended periods.

Advantages: Frontiersmen can shift any number of template points over to any of the following traits: increased HT [10/level], increased FP [3/level], increased Per [5/level], Animal Friend [5/level], Green Thumb [5/level], or Outdoorsman [10/level]. The GM with **Power-Ups 3** can also allow Explorer [5/level], Survivor [5/level], or Stalker [5/level].

Skills: Area Knowledge (Home area) (E) IQ [1]; Navigation (Land *or* Water) (A) IQ [2]; Scrounging (E) Per [1]; *and* Survival (Home area terrain) (A) Per [2]. ● *One* of Farming (A) IQ+1 [4]; Fishing (E) Per+2 [4]; Gardening (E) IQ+2 [4]; Naturalist (H) IQ [4]; or Tracking (A) Per+1 [4]; or Naturalist (H) IQ-1 [2] *and* Tracking (A) Per [2]. ● Spend two points on one ranged weapon skill appropriate to character's culture or region. ● *Four* of Guns (Pistol, Rifle, *or* Shotgun), Knot-Tying, Leatherworking, or Sewing, all (E) DX+1 [2]; Bow, Climbing, Lasso, Riding, Stealth, or Thrown Weapon, all (A) DX [2]; Camouflage, Carpentry, First Aid, Housekeeping, or Masonry all (E) IQ+1 [2]; Animal Handling (any), Armoury (Melee Weapons *or* Missile Weapons), Heraldry (Animal Brands), Machinist, Merchant, Navigation (Land *or* Air), Packing, Professional Skill (any specialty that would be useful to life on the frontier), Smith, Teamster, Traps, or Weather Sense, all (A) IQ [2]; Diagnosis or Naturalist, both (H) IQ-1 [2]; Hiking (A) HT [2]; or Observation or Survival (other terrain types), both (A) Per [2]; or spend any number of points to raise another lens or template skill.

Social Traits: Frontiersmen are rarely lured away from their homes or families by organizations, but if that happens, they must take their template's Duty and/or Rank traits.

Native

20 points

The red-faced savage trying to fight back the tides of civilization is a fiction created by various writers of the time. In truth, members of most tribes *were* civilized, but most people of the time felt that civilization couldn't possibly exist in a group of people who dressed so differently. This was *far* from the truth; the Iroquois (actually a confederacy of six tribes) had a working democracy long before many nations on Earth.

Unlike most lenses, this one *requires* that the character take a mandatory disadvantage – Social Stigma (Minority Group). The GM may waive this for half- or quarter-bloods who can "pass" for white. This lens can also be used for anyone who has "gone native."

Advantages: Native American characters may spend some of their template's optional advantage points on higher skills (see above) or any combination of the following: increased HT [10/level], increased Per [5/level], increased Will [5/level], Absolute Direction [5], Acute Senses [2/level], Combat Reflexes [15], Fit or Very Fit [5 or 15], Heroic Archer (**GURPS Martial Arts**, p. 45) [20], Outdoorsman [10/level], Reduced Consumption 1-2 (Water Only, -50%) [1 or 2], or Weapon Master (Bow) [20].

Skills: 20 points chosen from Brawling, Knot-Tying, Knife, or Leatherworking, all (E) DX+1 [2]; Axe/Mace, Boating/TL0 (Unpowered), Bolas, Bow, Climbing, Lasso, Riding (Horse), Spear, Staff, Stealth, Throwing, or Wrestling, all (A) DX [2]; Area Knowledge (tribe's territory) or Camouflage, both (E) IQ+1 [2]; Animal Handling (any), Armoury/TL0 (Melee Weapons *or* Missile Weapons), Farming, Navigation (any), Packing, Traps/TL0, or Weather Sense, all (A) IQ [2]; Naturalist, Pharmacy (Herbal), or Religious Ritual, all (H) IQ-1 [2]; Swimming (E) HT+1 [2]; Hiking or Running, both (A) HT [2]; Fishing (E) Per+1 [2]; Survival (any) or Tracking, both (A) Per [2]; Esoteric Medicine (H) Per-1 [2]; 2 more points in any lens skill to raise it by one level; or 6 more points to raise it by two.

Social Traits: You must take Social Stigma (Minority Group) [-10] as part of your disadvantage choices. Add Code of Honor (Indian Warrior) (**Old West,** p. 31) [Varies] and Low TL 1-5 [-5/level] to your disadvantage choices. Native scouts were a vital part of most military units of the time, but weren't considered part of the command structure. Those recruited by an organization must thus take their template's Duty, but rarely have Rank (consider Courtesy Rank instead).

Notes: Other traits may be added depending on the campaign and the GM. For example, Dog Soldiers (the Cheyenne *Hotamétaneo'o*) would have Vow (Never retreat from battle) [-15], Trademark (Fights tethered to the ground) [-5], and Schick (Can fight unimpeded while tethered to the ground)

[1]. In especially cinematic campaigns, the GM might replace Brawling and Wrestling with Karate and Judo. Optionally, the GM may reduce the amount of points spent on skills and allow players to buy other traits with them.

ADVENTURES IN THE WILD WEST

Most Western *Action* campaigns are going to be run just like their contemporary brethren, except for the following.

EQUIPMENT

The GM running campaigns in the Wild West should consult *GURPS High-Tech* and *GURPS High-Tech: Adventure Guns* for TL5 equipment, as most of the gear in *Action 1* will be inappropriate.

CAMPAIGN TYPES

Most campaign types can work as is with a little finessing, but the following work best: *Brotherhood in Blue* (lawmen rounding up outlaws), *Caper* (train and bank robberies, treasure hunts, and so on), *Mercs* (bounty hunters rounding up criminals and other wanted men), *Troubleshooters* (hired guns), and *Vigilante Justice* (lynch mobs and possess meting out frontier justice). *Commandos*, *Spy vs. Spy*, *Task Force*, and *War Against Terror* don't work well in the typical Wild West setting, though they could be used as inspiration for unusual situations.

Additionally, two new campaign types are available.

Border Wars: The PCs are homesteaders, ranchers, or the like (or work for them), defending their abodes or land from cattle rustlers, horse thieves, or greedy railroad tycoons. By its nature, such games take place in a specific town, city, or territory. Any template or lens is acceptable.

Outlaws: The PCs take the role of outlaws, men and women wanted by the law for crimes they committed (or didn't commit!). They don't have to be "on the run" but often are. One man (most often a shooter) typically leads them. Most outlaw gangs will want a mountain man, as many shooters and assassins as they can get, and at least one of a face man, an infiltrator, and a medic. Backgrounds can be anything, but criminal is the most common.

ASSISTANCE ROLLS

Many types of assistance rolls are simply not going to be possible because of technology (anything to do with computers, satellites, and other modern devices) or infrastructure. Most of the time, adventurers are going to be able to rely only on themselves and any local resources they can tap. One new form of assistance is available for those with Police Rank.

Deputization: You can get authorization (or have someone actually do it for you) to deputize another person. This allows them to temporarily function as if they had Police Rank 0 and whatever level of Legal Enforcement Powers you possess. These policing powers have a specific duration, which must

be decided when the character(s) are deputized. For instance, "until we find Deadeye Joe" is valid, but "until this town is cleaned up for good" isn't. Theoretically, there isn't a limit to the number of persons you can do this to, but the GM might wish to limit it to your Police Rank × 2 (minimum of one).

OLD WEST EXPLOITS

Most of the advice in *GURPS Action 2: Exploits* still holds true, but the GM should ignore any mention of modern technology like computers, cameras, etc. Where needed, he can substitute TL5 tech into the existing rules. For example, the *Chase* (*Action 2*, p. 31) rules could be used to simulate a stagecoach chase or even outlaws running down a train, while the *Standoff* (*Action 2*, p. 39) rules work as is for gunfights. The following new rule is especially useful for Wild West-style *Action* campaigns.

Gambling Is BAD

Gambling can be used to aid in social engineering attempts (*Action 2*, p. 15), serve as a "battle of wits" between two folks, or can be used on its own to garner money. For card games, this involves a Quick Contest of skill for all players involved. The GM should use BAD to determine the skill of other players. The player with the highest margin of success wins the game (or that hand). To determine the amount of money won, subtract the *lowest* margin of success from the winner's margin, then multiple that by $11 (or 1% of the average income for a job of the campaign's TL). Higher-stake's games can use higher percentages at the GM's option. "Friendly games" use Games (Card Games) instead.

Participants can also cheat. This usually involves a roll against Filch or Sleight of Hand; success gives the person +2 on their Gambling roll (+4 on a critical success).

Other games may involve a bet for a specific amount of money, and use Gambling as described above. If card games or gambling in general is the "centerpiece" of the campaign, the GM should replace a Quick Contest with a Regular Contest in the "final showdown" or use *Straight to the Flush* options from *Pyramid#3/59: Conspiracies*.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Christopher R. Rice's heroes have always been cowboys, despite his Cherokee heritage. From Portsmouth, Virginia, he dreams of being able to write full-time, or at least eke out a living doing it. He wishes to thank L.A., his own personal muse, as well as the rest of his gaming group; Antoni Ten Monrós; Beth "Archangel" McCoy, the "Sith Editrix"; Douglas Cole; Timothy "Humabot" Ponce; and Emily "Bruno" Smirle, for being most excellent sounding boards.

EIDETIC MEMORY

STEAMBOATS AND LOCOMOTIVES OF THE OLD WEST

BY DAVID L. PULVER

Stagecoaches and wagon trains opened the Old West, but the steam-powered riverboat and the locomotive were equally vital. The golden age of the steamboat was on the Mississippi in the Antebellum Era, when boats were the prime means of transporting bales of cotton to cities or coastal ports. By the beginning of classic Old West (around 1865), steamboats were larger, a bit safer thanks to regulations, and more magnificent than ever before. They were also dinosaurs rapidly losing market share to the railways. At the end of the 1880s, the boats were as obsolete as stagecoaches: the relentless westward expansion of the railway lines marked the passing away of the frontier, and the West was truly won.

*I sell here, Sir, what all the world desires to have – **power.***

– Matthew Boulton

PASSENGER RIVERBOAT (TL5)

The most romantic form of travel associated with the Old West is surely the steam-powered riverboat. The Mississippi, Ohio, Missouri, and Red Rivers and their many connecting tributaries were natural arteries for carrying people and cargo between east and west. Unlike railways, they didn't require any expensive track to be laid down.

It's said steamboats were built to rules of thumb, not laws of physics. An 1860s-era passenger boat might be 250' to 300' long and 35' to 48' wide. It was steam powered, with multiple high-pressure boilers and pair of tall smoke stacks, driven by paddle wheels – either a single big stern wheel or paired side wheels. The Western rivers weren't deep, so riverboats were shallow-draft, light, and flat-bottomed. The vessels were said to ride *on* rather *in* the river. They also were built high, with multiple stacked wooden decks.

The lowest *main deck* contained the boilers, steam engines and other machinery, a kitchen, stacks of cordwood for fuel, and the big cargo and livestock holds (cotton, molasses, and grain were common). A baggage room or two, watched by an armed guard, held passengers' valuables, expensive cargo, and mail. The mass of poorer passengers – often a few hundred – slept in the cargo hold, using cotton bales or sacks of grain for beds.

Next up was the *boiler deck* (located above the boilers). This held the majority of passenger cabins. Most were cramped, but luxury was provided by a saloon that ran the entire deck length between the port and starboard cabins. Provided with a bar and outfitted with 15-20 tables seating up to 200 diners, passengers could enjoy drinking, fine food, music, and gambling. The best boats had magnificent decor befitting a fine hotel: velvet carpets, ornate rosewood furnishings, ceilings with crystal chandeliers, stained glass skylights cut to illuminate the lower decks, and halls lined with mirrors. Some boats added other amenities such as a nursery and a library.

Built atop the boiler deck was a smaller central superstructure, referred to as the *hurricane deck* or *Texas deck*, which housed cabins for the boat's officers and additional passengers. Finally, stacked atop this deck was the glass-enclosed *pilot house* (the bridge) from which the captain and pilot commanded and navigated the boat.

Staircases or ladders connected each deck. The boat was also provided with lights, whistles, and other gear such as winches, pumps, and firefighting hoses.

A riverboat's officers were led by the captain, his pilot (who steered and navigated the boat, and had to be an expert on the river's idiosyncrasies), and the boat's engineer (who managed the high-pressure boilers and held everyone's life in his hands). A boat carried dozens of other crew: a few mechanics working under the engineer, the roustabouts (deck hands) who loaded cargo, a few cooks, a pair of chambermaids (the only female crew), and the firemen and stokers who worked in harsh conditions feeding the engines. Some roustabouts and many of the below-decks crew (e.g., cooks and stokers) were black.

Statistics in the table below are for a large 285' riverboat of the 1860s era.

Passenger Riverboat Table

Terms and notation are as defined in *Vehicle Statistics* (pp. B462-463).

SHIPHANDLING (SHIP)

TL	Vehicle	ST/HP	Hnd/SR	HT	Move	LWt.	Load	SM	Occ.	DR	Range	Cost	Loc.	Draft
5	Riverboat	608	-2/4	10c	1/7	3,300	1,500	+10	300A	2	1,000	$2,800,000	GSs	4'

OWNERSHIP AND OPERATION

Railways were corporate affairs with offices in major cities. *Steamboats* were usually owned by individual captains or small coalitions of rivermen and merchants. Larger "packets" ran fixed schedules and charged higher fares. Other "transients" went where business beckoned, and risked boiler fires (see below) to race their rivals to the next port for first crack at a load of freight. Both packet and transient boat captains also raced to beat records and raise their reputation; the 1870 New Orleans to St. Louis steam boat race between *Robert E. Lee* and *Natchez* was one of the last and most famous contests.

Sin on the River

Just like its shore counterpart, a riverboat's saloon was frequented by professional prostitutes and gamblers. Riverboat gambling flourished as towns passed anti-gaming ordinances. Most professional gamblers were cheats; violent confrontations or even shootouts aboard were not uncommon when a gambler was discovered with a marked deck. More than one unlucky card shark was forced to dive overboard and try to swim for it to escape with his life . . .

River Hazards

Steamboat travel mixed luxury and danger. Western rivers were vulnerable to flooding and erosion with spring melts, their banks collapsing to form new sandbars and channels, with water depths changing by several feet in a few weeks. Adding to the peril were fallen trees and boat wrecks that formed deadly underwater snags. To navigate this maze, a successful riverboat pilot had to be a respected expert on a particular river or tributary, with up-to-date Area Knowledge (and word of mouth) of the constantly changing conditions.

Many boats still ran aground (taking precious hours to refloat) or worse, tore open their bottoms and sank. Far worse were the dangers of stressed boilers, compounded by the practice of pushing vessels to their limits. An engineer can tease out an extra 10% or so of speed (roll hourly vs. Mechanic skill) in an attempt to outdo a rival. However, misjudgment or poor maintenance (a critical failure on the Mechanic roll) could lead to sparks from an overheating boiler, starting fires or, worse, causing a catastrophic steam explosion that reduced the boat to wreckage and killed or maimed all aboard. The average boat's lifespan was five to 10 years, and no insurer would ever pay more than 3/4 of a boat's value.

Rail Hazards

Railways were safer than riverboats, although they had their risks. Train robberies of express cars or well-to-do passengers could net several thousand dollars, but were an occasional hazard (or opportunity). Fire and explosion were rare, but the early couplings and manual hand brakes were dangerous to use, and crews were often crushed between carriages or fell from moving trains.

TYPE 4-4-0 "AMERICAN" LOCOMOTIVE (TL5)

The Type 4-4-0 was the classic locomotive for most of the Old West era. Nearly all major railroads in North America operated 4-4-0s from the 1830s through the 1880s.

The "4-4-0" designation refers to the wheel arrangement – four leading, four driving, and no trailing wheels. These engines were distinguished by their high driver wheels, open-rear cab, diamond-shaped smokestack, big headlamp, and front-mounted cowcatcher. Numerous versions of the 4-4-0 were built, with regular improvements. The statistics in the table on p. 23 are typical of 1865-1874.

These locomotives were called "eight wheelers" or "the standard" for most of this period. The popular nickname "the American" entered parlance in 1872 after they began to be replaced on larger lines by newer models like the Consolidation class.

A 4-4-0 was closely coupled to a 20-ton tender, which carried fuel and water. The rear of the locomotive's cab was open to allow the fireman to transfer wood from tender to engine. A tender held two cords of firewood (total three to four tons) and 2,000 gallons water. In the 1880s, engines grew more powerful, and wood was replaced by coal.

In addition to the tender, a locomotive pulled a train of several cars. Freight trains typically consisted of some combination of 10-20 boxcars, flat cars, and cattle cars. A caboose at the end provided extra crew accommodations for several brakemen. A passenger train consisted of four to five coaches and one to two baggage cars, one serving as caboose.

Passenger coaches were divided into a first-class configuration and a more cramped but cheaper second-class design. A typical coach car was wooden, about 60' long, 10' wide, and 14' high, seating 60 people in double seats on either side of a center aisle. (Older trains had 80% of this size and capacity.) Small bags were stowed in racks above the seats.

Trains on long-distance routes included Pullman cars ("sleepers"). Painted dark green, they were owned by the Pullman company rather than the railway, and were longer (70') with folding beds and steamboat-levels of luxury. Some individuals owned richly appointed private cars as well. Dining cars were introduced by Pullman in 1868; they could serve 24 people. Prior to this, railroads always stopped for food at stations; 19th-century depot restaurants were notorious for bad food and shoddy service.

Baggage cars held large bags and trunks, and carried mail, newspapers, and "express items," including payroll and valuables. These cars were less decorated than cars that carried the passengers, and have at least one guard aboard. Sometimes a train had dedicated express cars for mail, high-value goods, and money, with combination safes and multiple armed guards (e.g., Wells-Fargo agents). More often, the express and baggage car were combined into a single baggage-express combination car.

A passenger train traveled at about 35 mph, but the average was 25 mph (allowing for stops). Freight trains were slower but rarely stopped; 25 mph was also typical.

A 4-4-0 carried three crew: the engineer in command, who drove the train; the fireman, who regulated boiler pressure and ensured the engine was fed with wood or coal, and the head brakeman, who controlled the brakes. Each engineer was assigned a personal locomotive, customized to his specifications, and given an individual name. Additional crew (at minimum for a freight train, a conductor and rear brakeman) rode in a caboose at the rear of the train. Prior to the invention of air brakes in 1869, railway cars required additional brakemen (usually one per two cars) to manually set the brakes by clambering outside the train while it was still moving; it took about 500 yards to stop a 40-car train.

Passenger cars carried porters (often black) and other crew as needed. Some also had newsboys – children who hawked papers, dime novels, and refreshments. Railway personnel rarely wore uniforms in the early 1860s, but in later years, major railroads required it.

In the early 1850s, Daniel McCallum, the General Superintendent of the New York and Erie Railroad, had a problem. At the time, the New York and Erie Railway was the largest railroad in the world. It moved trains over one million miles a year and employed hundreds of people – locomotive engineers, conductors, mechanics, station agents and more. For the first time in history it was impossible for a single person to personally manage every one of his employees. The solution was an historic innovation: the middle manager.

– Sam McNerney, "What's Best For Employees Is Best For Business"

ABOUT THE COLUMNIST

David L. Pulver is a Canadian freelance author. An avid science-fiction fan, he began roleplaying in junior high with the newly released **Basic Dungeons & Dragons.** Upon graduating from university, he decided to become a game designer. Since then, David has written over 70 roleplaying game books, and he has worked as a staff writer, editor, and line developer for Steve Jackson Games and Guardians of Order. He is best known for creating **Transhuman Space,** co-authoring the **Big Eyes, Small Mouth** anime RPG, and writing countless **GURPS** books, including the **GURPS Basic Set,** *Fourth Edition,* **GURPS Ultra-Tech,** and the **GURPS Spaceships** series.

Type 4-4-0 "American" Locomotive Table

Terms and notation are as defined in *Vehicle Statistics* (pp. B462-463).

DRIVING (LOCOMOTIVE)/TL5

TL	Vehicle	ST/HP	Hnd/SR	HT	Move	LWt.	Load	SM	Occ.	DR	Range	Cost	Loc.
5	4-4-0 Locomotive	155	-2/4	13c	2/20‡	30	0.3	+6	3	6	200	$225,000	g8W
5	Tender	131†	–	13	–	21	3	+5	0	5	–	$50,000	8W
5	Coach Car	133†	–	13	–	25	6	+6	60	2	–	$70,000	G8W
5	Baggage/Express Car	133†	–	13	–	31	12	+6	5	2	–	$60,000	g8W

A Westward-Shambling Horde

by Sean Punch

As **GURPS Zombies** demonstrates, zombies lurk throughout all of human history. Yet the most popular backdrop for zombie fiction is the world from the late 1960s to present, the setting of most modern zombie flicks – though the quasi-medieval realms of hack 'n' slash fantasy place a close second in RPGs. Tales set in other times tend simply to import infectious ghouls from horror movies or, less often, necromantic servitors from fantasy. The Wild West can see those options and raise the stakes.

The Wild West is larger than life and tricky to nail down as a historical period. Most people take it to mean the second half of the 19th century – the heyday of Buffalo Bill, Wyatt Earp, and Jesse James, of Dodge City, Deadwood, and Tombstone. We all know the cinematic version. What's often missing on film is the genocide against the natives, leaving tens of thousands dead from the Trail of Tears to Wounded Knee . . . the bloody scope of the American Civil War, which ground up and spat out more than 1,000,000 civilians and soldiers, some as far west as Arizona . . . the thousands of Chinese laborers who died building the transcontinental railroad . . . epidemics and quack medicine . . . homesteaders starving and freezing . . . miners buried alive in silver and gold rushes. It was an age of death, most of it unrelated to showdowns with six-shooters.

It was also an age of the occult. Native American wise men turned their spiritual powers against white interlopers. Out of the east seeped Louisiana Voodoo. From the west trickled Chinese magic, not to mention opium – San Francisco had big trouble in Little China from the beginning. Wherever stagecoaches or trains went, so went every variety of American and European mystic and fraud; Spiritists, Mesmerists, and readers of cards, palms, and crystal balls came seeking rubes to dupe. With a hard life driving folks to clutch at any straw, and real public education well off in the future, superstition ran wild. If Native American burial grounds or a *gris-gris* didn't spook you, that was probably because you feared Hell even more – hellfire preachers greatly outnumbered kindly missionaries.

With death and superstition rampaging over a large, often-isolated region, the scene is set for zombie stories. Here's a pair of six-guns to start you off. Each nugget provides background color, plus *Lightin' the Fuse* to suggest ways to include it your Wild West campaign and *Book Learnin'* to draw attention to relevant sections of **GURPS Zombies.**

> *Some people seem to think that death is the only reality in life. Others, happier and rightlier minded, see and feel that life is the reality in death.*
>
> *– Julius Charles Hare and Augustus William Hare,*
> **Guesses at Truth**

Bad Medicine

Native mystics who wielded magic in the struggle against white incursions weren't as common as the movies suggest, but neither were they unknown. Most such individuals were healers and guides, and their medicine took the form of *defensive* rituals – the best-known example being the Ghost Shirts of the Lakota, which tragically failed to stop U.S. Cavalry bullets at Wounded Knee (1890). Native American beliefs did not look kindly on "bad medicine" (curses), and anyone who messed with such rituals was liable to become an outcast. Yet desperate times call for desperate measures . . .

Lightin' the Fuse: To push a sane healer or wise man to break the rules and throw a curse, somebody (settlers, the Cavalry, a stronger rival tribe, etc.) would have to place a native band in mortal danger. An *insane* sorcerer wouldn't wait for this – though he most likely wouldn't enjoy the support of an entire tribe, either. Regardless, once the magic-worker is put in a situation where he needs more firepower to battle his rivals, he might decide to summon aid. Raising an army of undead warriors from an old battlefield – or, if he's evil or desperate enough, *Burial Grounds* (p. 25) – would certainly given him better fighting odds.

Book Learnin': This is a straightforward case of *Undead Zombies* (**Zombies,** pp. 17-18) motivated by *Black Magic* (**Zombies,** p. 22). These walking dead won't be Infectious ghouls or anything like that. They'll probably be susceptible to faith (Can Be Turned By True Faith; **Zombies,** p. 66), even that of white preacher men, but they're also likely to have the Desecrator perk (**Zombies,** p. 55). Otherwise, represent them with *Necromantic Reanimates* (**Zombies,** pp. 99-101), paying particular attention to "Shamanic Summons" (**Zombies,** p. 100). A cunning medicine man – and most are – will preferentially animate brawny warriors with combat skills.

BURIAL GROUNDS

Before Columbus' arrival, somewhere between two million and 20 million inhabitants called North America home. Dip south into Aztec territory and you can add another 15 million. And that's merely a snapshot – native civilizations were established for *millennia* by the Wild West era, and 2,000-year-old burial sites survive today.

Like all cultures with spiritual beliefs, Native American ones had funerary traditions. Some interred their dead. Others air-dried corpses or left them to be stripped of flesh by wildlife. A few (e.g., Idaho's Niimíipu) might even have sacrificed wives to entomb with warriors. The point is that the West's indigenous peoples ritually laid their dead to rest, and burials, cave tombs, and elevated platforms dominated; cremations and funerary canoes were West Coast traditions, while the practice of dismembering skeletons and burying the bones stopped well east of the Wild West.

That's a *lot* of corpses, and like ritually buried dead everywhere, these were protected by charms and prayers. Disinterring a body was a bad idea. Turning it to face the wrong way (pointing the head in the wrong direction, not flipping the corpse face-down, *South Park* fashion) was worse. The Navajo and Apache believed that even if you followed all the rules, the ghosts of the dead were bad news and itching for trouble. This typifies the general threat posed by disturbing the dead: spirits returning to punish the disrespectful.

Who says an old chestnut can't be an effective plot device?

Lightin' the Fuse: Anything that disturbs a sacred burial site could touch things off; e.g., building a homestead, blasting for a mine or the railroad, or fighting (white men vs. Indians, lawmen vs. outlaws, a Civil War clash in the Trans-Mississippi Theater, etc.). *Any* disturbance counts – while the convention is that white men are to blame, one native tribe might encroach on rivals' land (common up to the 1860s) or the burial grounds of a long-gone civilization. A medicine man who makes *Bad Medicine* (pp. 24-25) is just asking for trouble, and may stir up more – and more-powerful – zombies than he counted on or can control.

Book Learnin': Build the zombies around the Solidified Spirit meta-trait (**Zombies,** p. 69) – although they might look like walking corpses and boast Terror if they were left exposed to desiccate, be pecked by crows, etc.; see *Undead Zombies and Funerary Rites* (**Zombies,** p. 18). Their motivation is a curse on the person disturbing the burial site, as discussed in *Unhallowed Ground* and *Vengeance* (**Zombies,** pp. 20-21). While zombies like this aren't Infectious, victims slain *on sacred ground* may join their ranks! They're customarily Inexorable (**Zombies,** pp. 69-70), and even if Can Be

Turned By True Faith (**Zombies,** p. 66) applies, that's only vis-à-vis medicine men from a suitable tradition. Don't count on Dependency on home soil, either – these revenants *will* find you long after you get the heck out of Dodge. For bonus horror, remember: (1) Homogenous spirits aren't terribly vulnerable to Winchesters and six-shooters, and (2) great warriors were buried with weapons and powerful funerary rituals, so serious combat abilities are likely.

> *Lord, I beseech you. Grant me wisdom, to see the way clear. Let me help these Walking Dead find their final resting place. Help me to end their torture and misery. To show them the way to Your Eternal forgiveness. Amen.*
>
> *– Abraham Lincoln,*
> **Abraham Lincoln**
> **vs. Zombies**

CHINESE BLACK MAGIC

From the 1850s to the 1880s, more than 300,000 Chinese immigrated to America, the main port of entry being San Francisco. They came for gold at first, but many more were employed as laborers. In particular, some 12,000 to 14,000 such workers did most of the work of completing the transcontinental railroad. Many of these settled in Sacramento in the 1870s, but others were scattered across the rest of California, Nevada and Utah, and later Arizona and Wyoming.

The Chinese were not treated well. In the period 1863-1869, railroad workers suffered a mortality rate upward of 10%. Moreover, racism ran rampant through the entire Wild West period, and the Chinese Exclusion Act of 1882 spurred deadly hate crimes over the next few decades. In true Western tradition, the picture is of a hard life too often ending in premature death.

The occult was on the table, too. Knowing little about Western medicine – and not liking what they saw – Chinese immigrants brought their own herbalists and doctors. If the tales can be trusted, these included the predictable quotient of would-be magicians. Most of the associated practices were harmless; many were actively helpful. Inevitably, though, there were individuals more interested in personal power. This was the realm of *gǔ:* a complicated concept tied up in poison, harmful sorcery, mind control, ghosts, and decay. The zombie possibilities should be obvious!

Lightin' the Fuse: A sorcerer (*wu*) posing as a doctor might exploit his powers to engineer a scheme involving enslaved workers and gold. A well-meaning defender of his people may wield magic against hatred in some isolated town or rail camp. A magician with far less lofty goals could make a critical error around a trainload of dead bodies. The result in all cases? Zombies.

Book Learnin': Gŭ could give rise to any number of zombie types, but the best fits are living people enslaved to mine gold and undead produced from the bodies of dead laborers (start with Intact Corpse or Rotting Corpse; see *Zombies,* pp. 68-69). This takes the form of *Black Magic* (*Zombies,* p. 22); living victims are first poisoned to produce the effects discussed in *Mind-Altering Drugs* (*Zombies,* p. 23) or simply to increase the supply of corpses. Automaton (*Zombies,* p. 69) is a given. The resulting zombies won't be Infectious – they'll resemble Vodou slaves (*Zombies,* p. 102) if alive or reanimated corpses (*Zombies,* pp. 100-101) if undead. The *real* threat here is the magician, though he might send his creations after anyone who opposes him.

FEVER!

Every second Western has somebody suffering from "fever," which could be almost anything! The germ theory of disease was new, not universally accepted, and certainly not central to medical teachings prior to Joseph Lister's paper of 1867 – and even then, book learnin' was slow to propagate across the frontier. Meanwhile, there was plenty to die from: smallpox was killing off the Plains Indians up through 1870, and periodically dropped white men, too; the cholera pandemic of 1829-1851 followed settlers westward and put some 150,000 people in the grave; and there were regular waves of diphtheria, influenza, scarlet fever, typhoid, typhus, and yellow fever, and even bubonic plague at the turn of the century. Don't forget "consumption" (tuberculosis) and "rabbit fever" (tularemia) – and of course rabies, which caused recurring scares throughout the 19th century.

Why not add zombie plague? It would fit right in: a mutant strain of rabies, a prion in the brains of the cattle being driven by cowboys (or of the buffalo hunted on the Interior Plains up to the mid 1880s), or an exotic illness spread inland from a port. Between the slow speed of news (the transcontinental telegraph line was completed in 1861, but many towns weren't on it) and the unremarkable reality of death from illness, a zombie plague could end up entrenched yet contained by distance – and if the heroes wipe it out before it spreads, the world may never learn of it, like in our history books. Many a settlement burned or fell to cattle wars, after all.

Lightin' the Fuse: An infected stranger traveling by coach or train from New Orleans, New York, San Francisco, or another major port that receives ships from faraway lands might leave a swath of disease in his wake. If the outbreak is 100% domestic, then a herd might spread it from cowtown to cowtown. Or the plague could lurk in a well, a swamp, or another static reservoir, in which case the PCs' first battle with zombies may be in a "ghost town" that isn't as dead as it looks. Remember, disease is a mystery in the Wild West, so it's fitting for ordinary folks to *believe* it's a curse – that's surely what fleeing survivors are going to say!

Book Learnin': This is simply *Infection* (*Zombies,* p. 21) in a setting where sickness is widespread and misunderstood. The zombies should be Infectious (*Zombies,* p. 67). They might also carry ordinary disease; see *Pestilent* (*Zombies,* p. 56). Otherwise, pick from among plague ghouls (*Zombies,* pp. 90-91), infected (*Zombies,* pp. 97-98), crazies (*Zombies,* pp. 101-102), etc., or invent a variant. Be sure to include "fever" among the early symptoms, so that the local doc won't have cause to suspect that anything is amiss. Since the underlying mechanism is a pathogen, the zombies shouldn't be particularly susceptible to mystical powers, if such are available to PCs.

HARD WINTER

The infamous Donner Party expedition saw a wagon train of pioneers turn to eating their dead to survive after being pinned down by a harsh winter near what is today the California-Nevada border. Then there was Boone Helm: gunfighter, mountain man . . . and serial killer, who ate pieces of his victims on his journey from Missouri to California in the 1850s. And white men spread rumors of Native Americans engaging in cannibalism, though there was little substance to these. Such tales were woven into the patchwork of Wild West folklore; stories of people eating each other were a favorite around the campfire.

The connection with ghouls is obvious, and it wouldn't be hard for a classic Western tale to become a zombie story: Start with a settlement that is cut off and turns to eating human flesh out of desperation. Have them retain their taste for this after it's no longer necessary. Then let the period's Lamarckian thinking do the rest – people would respond to the pressures of starvation and the need to slaughter humans for food by *changing.* Even today, American folklore is full of stories about isolated communities of creepy cannibals . . .

Lightin' the Fuse: Harsh weather and not enough to eat might lead anybody to chow down on a dead companion. A bad year at the homestead might make even a mild winter cause enough. And the tales of cannibal tribes might be true. What turns this sort of thing into a zombie story is the perpetuation of the habit – so make sure that the people-eaters are left to their own devices for a while. Then have the PCs discover them at some "lost" settlement or fort, or isolated valley . . . well-and-truly committed to their new lifestyle.

Book Learnin': This is a weird application of *Overpopulation, Overconsumption, and Pollution* (*Zombies,* p. 9) to a setting that's neither modern nor overcrowded, but where resources have run out nonetheless. The resulting zombies are alive, not undead; rather than being afflicted by the supernatural, they're the product of a bizarre form of *Mutation* (*Zombies,* p. 21); and they aren't Infectious, though their bite is most likely Pestilent (*Zombies,* p. 56). They don't *have* to eat people, but they *like* to, giving Odious Racial Habit (Eats Humans) or Social Stigma (Monster) – and probably Inhuman (*Zombies,* p. 70). For a ready-made version, use the face-eater (*Zombies,* pp. 101-102) minus the Addiction.

MESMERIZED AND GALVANIZED

The whitewashing of the Wild West included blaming everything weird on people of color; see *Bad Medicine* (pp. 24-25), *Chinese Black Magic* (pp. 25-26), and *Voodoo Queen* (pp. 29-30). Yet white men were no less fascinated with strange claims – they were just more prone to dub it "science" when it wasn't. The 19th century saw revivals of astrology, faith healing, mediums, and séances. Groups such as the Theosophical Society (founded 1875) and Hermetic Order of the Golden Dawn (founded 1887) almost certainly reached America.

To quote historian James Webb, "Reason died sometime before 1865 . . . after the Age of Reason came the Age of the Irrational."

This had little to do with zombies, but it set the stage for people to accept wild claims. Mesmerism morphed from "animal magnetism" (affecting a living subject with ordinary magnets) to hypnotism in this period, and though *studied* as a medical therapy – often in direct opposition to the occult – it was all too often *practiced* as if miraculous powers were involved. It was known in America by the late 1860s. Experiments with electricity continued, too; Giovanni Aldini made a corpse twitch in a lurid public demonstration in London in 1803, and American authors were still referring to this in the 1830s. By 1867, Yankee neurologist George Miller Beard was writing about applications of electricity in surgery. Ordinary folks who heard of this research saw mesmerism as mind control and "galvanism" as reanimation.

Lightin' the Fuse: It's hard to say whether this stuff reached the Wild West, but if it did, it would be in the form of a discredited researcher fleeing westward ahead of the law or angry backers – or maybe in the actions of a quack, quite common in the West (see *Snake Oil,* below). All it takes to involve zombies in the plot is to have this individual turn the living into slaves via magnetism or hypnotism . . . or reanimate the dead using voltaic piles, hand-cranked generators, or lightning. As part of a traveling show, the necessary gear – and possibly some zombies – could arrive hidden in a covered wagon.

Book Learnin': Mesmerized slaves would be living zombies with Slave Mentality and the Asocial meta-trait (*Zombies,* p. 101). Galvanized corpses (*Zombies,* p. 22) would be constructs or undead built around the Intact Corpse meta-trait (*Zombies,* pp. 68-69), with the Electrical disadvantage and strange forms of *Upkeep* (*Zombies,* p. 80); compare the galvanoid (*Zombies,* p. 92). Both would have all the other disadvantages in Automaton (*Zombies,* p. 69); neither would be Infectious, eat the living, or depend on occult powers. The mesmerized would be unimpressive foes, exploited by a master who's the scenario's villain; the galvanized may be true Frankensteinian menaces with extraordinary physical gifts.

Snake Oil

Most Wild West quackery (not all; see *Mesmerized and Galvanized,* pp. 26-27) took the form of patent medicines peddled by "snake-oil salesmen." This term has foggy origins, but the leading candidate was a traditional cure dubbed "snake oil," brought from China by laborers building the transcontinental railroad in the 1860s (see *Chinese Black Magic,* pp. 25-26) – though beginning in the early 1880s, Texas cowboy Clark Stanley sold a Snake Oil Liniment after purportedly studying secret Hopi medicine. Whatever the truth may be, such preparations were commonplace in the West. And so were their promoters: the "medicine show" was a fixture of this era. Such traveling circuses extolled the virtues of nostrums and miracle elixirs that allegedly revitalized the body, often trotting out native spokesmen to talk up the concoction's traditional roots.

Meanwhile, there was a darker side to the drugs of the day: opium. Its abuse crossed the Pacific with the Chinese fortune-seekers who arrived in California seeking gold, and traveled eastward with the railroad. Opium was uncontrolled until 1875, when legislation was passed in San Francisco – ostensibly to curb opium dens, but more likely as an anti-Chinese measure. As early as the 1850s, though, there was plenty of homegrown abuse in the form of the casual use of laudanum: a tincture of opium originally introduced to ease the suffering caused by disease (see *Fever!,* p. 26). As well, the opium derivative morphine was the painkiller of choice in the American Civil War, often leading soldiers down the road to addiction.

Zombifying the Wild West

All of these suggestions assume that the West isn't only wild, but also slightly *weird.* Some of them require self-identified sorcerers and holy folk to possess genuine supernatural powers, others call for curses and spirits to be more than legends, and a few rely on functioning mad science. Within those limits, the GM could adapt any of these ideas to an existing Wild West campaign that needs spicing up. Each essay mentions events, dates, and locations to help the GM decide which options fit best.

It's also possible to build an entire campaign around zombie stories. If forces such as curses, magic, spirits, and weird science exist but are harshly limited by the laws of nature (the Wild West was part of the real world, after all!), they might be unable to conjure creatures from whole cloth or imbue their manifestations with free will and intelligence. Such powers could be limited to perverting human bodies or souls, with mindless results. In short: All attempts to create monsters result in zombies.

Within those parameters, there's lots of room for variety; *everything* discussed here could coexist. Perhaps the land has always harbored the strange radiation of *Too Deep* (pp. 28-29), twisted diseases of *Fever!* (p. 27), and TMWNMTK of *Too Deep, Too* (p. 29). Then native tribes turned up and established *Burial Grounds* (p. 25). And *then* Europeans, Africans, and Asians arrived, bringing along their own mystical weirdness as described in *The Man Comes Around* (p. 28), *Voodoo Queen* (pp. 29-30), and *Chinese Black Magic* (pp. 25-26) – as well as mad science in the shape of *Mesmerized and Galvanized* (pp. 26-27) and *Snake Oil* (pp. 27-28). From there the indigenous peoples pushed back with *Bad Medicine* (pp. 24-25), and all sides plunged into a cycle of blood and supernatural meddling that culminated in an apocalypse of *War Wights* (p. 30). And if humans can turn into all these other kinds of zombies, the sort in *Hard Winter* (p. 26) might be our true nature!

For a less-convoluted story, relate only *some* of these elements. Mesmerism and snake oil might originate from the same labs. Bad medicine, Chinese black magic, and Voodoo could be different paths to identical results. And so on.

Neither patent medicine nor opium turned people into zombies in reality. However, opium certainly left users zoned-out, while the ingredients of most forms of "snake oil" were mysterious, to say the least (and may sometimes have included opium). In even a slightly weird take on the Wild West, either could enslave those who are weak of mind or body. And a "revitalizing" nostrum might be a little *too* revitalizing . . .

Lightin' the Fuse: A sinister patent-medicine salesman might be peddling an elixir that zombifies the living or ensures that the terminally ill rise as the walking dead after death. And until the 1870s, laudanum had no consistent entry in the pharmacopoeia – it was commonly adulterated with belladonna, hashish, and other psychoactive compounds. Users of such a witch's brew might be America's first "bath salts" victims.

Book Learnin': Living people twisted by patent medicine or opium products could exemplify *Drug Abuse* (**Zombies,** p. 9), *Zombie Drugs* (**Zombies,** p. 22), and/or *Mind-Altering Drugs* (**Zombies,** p. 23); they would have Addiction and probably Glimpses of Clarity (**Zombies,** p. 66), and resemble either face-eaters or Vodou slaves (**Zombies,** pp. 101-102). Undead "revitalized" by patent medicine are a clear-cut case of *Serums* (**Zombies,** p. 23), and use the Intact Corpse meta-trait (**Zombies,** pp. 68-69); they might otherwise look like a low-tech version of Soldier X (**Zombies,** p. 104), or perhaps *Necromantic Reanimates* (**Zombies,** pp. 99-101) with the "Alchemical Animates" option (**Zombies,** p. 100). None of these zombies would be Infectious – and supernatural traits aren't likely unless Clark Stanley's Hopi medicine is *Bad Medicine* (pp. 24-25) – but flesh-eating is negotiable if the victims are deranged enough.

The Man Comes Around

Hellfire preachers have a long lineage in the United States, starting with the Puritans who settled the Northeast. These 17th-century Christians believed that demonic forces, possession, and witchcraft were genuine threats to the living as well as to immortal souls in the Hereafter, and comported themselves accordingly. The late 18th through mid-19th centuries brought the Second Great Awakening, which concerned itself with correcting the evils of Man before the Second Coming of Christ. And *then* came the rise of Biblical literalism in the 1840s, which rejected suggestions that the Bible was allegory or legend, and took every word as literal truth – including the parts about dead people rising bodily for Judgment.

This was the religious climate of the Wild West. It was an easy sell: Life *was* tough for most people, and the idea that the Afterlife would be better was attractive. Moreover, there were "heathen" faiths on all sides – check out *Bad Medicine* (pp. 24-25), *Chinese Black Magic* (pp. 25-26), and *Voodoo Queen* (pp. 29-30) – to portray as bogeymen, tests of faith, and signs of the End Times. The typical homesteader, and even the not-so-pure cowboy or gunfighter, wouldn't blink an eye at the suggestion that the sky might open up and call the dead from their graves.

Lightin' the Fuse: Judgment Day is a big deal . . . too big to be anything less than the theme of a whole campaign. However, the West was home to plenty of small, regional Christian sects who believed that only *their* people were going to Heaven – and whether thanks to Divine Will or the concentrated psychic

influence of a town full of people, the local cemetery may well disgorge its dead. A sufficiently fiery preacher might even be able to curse sinners, natives, Yankees, Confederates, or almost anyone else he dislikes with a zombie plague.

Book Learnin': This is a straight-up case of *Fear of the Afterlife* or *Fear of the **Lack** of an Afterlife* (**Zombies,** p. 8). The zombies are driven by a kind of *Divine Displeasure* (**Zombies,** p. 20) in an apocalypse of the old-timey sort; see *When Hell Is Full* (**Zombies,** p. 19) and *The Dead Rise* (**Zombies,** p. 24). They might be built on *any* of the body meta-traits (**Zombies,** pp. 68-69); pick Solidified Spirit to be semi-realistic and have most dead people long decayed into dust, or one of the others if corpses somehow wait around in graves. They won't be Infectious, but they sure as Hell will be Inexorable (**Zombies,** pp. 69-70) and supernatural. Judgment's Legionaries (**Zombies,** pp. 93-94) hit closest to the mark, though a preacher man might just call up something under *Necromantic Reanimates* (**Zombies,** pp. 99-101) with the "Theurgic Thralls" option (**Zombies,** p. 100).

> *Whatever lives is granted breath*
> *But by the grace and sufferance*
> *of Death.*
>
> *– Countee Cullen, "Song Dialogue"*

Too Deep

Nitroglycerin was synthesized by Italian chemist Ascanio Sobrero in 1847. It quickly found its way to the American West, where miners and railroad companies alike used it for blasting during the 1850s and 1860s. Swedish chemist Alfred Nobel – inspired by a nitroglycerin accident that killed his younger brother – developed dynamite as a safer alternative, patenting it in 1867. Nitroglycerin disasters saw dynamite become the Wild West's favorite explosive. Other earth-shattering innovations of the time, many of them Nobel's, included the blasting cap (1865), blasting gelatin (1875), and Ballistite (1887).

All this let people dig deeper than ever before, and "wild" fairly describes how it was done, as explosives were poorly regulated. Gold- and silver-hungry prospectors blasted for wealth. Railroad companies minimized time and expenses by demolishing whatever got in their way. The threat of being blown up was obvious, yet other potential dangers lurked. Vast areas of the Wild West hid uranium deposits, found in modern-day Arizona, Colorado, New Mexico, South Dakota, Texas, and Wyoming – as well as California, Nevada, and Utah, which saw extensive rail work. Uranium means radiation, and horror tells us that radiation means *zombies*.

Lightin' the Fuse: All it takes is for somebody with explosives to blow open a chunk of "weird-lookin', glowin' rock" or otherwise expose radioactive minerals. In *our* world, these materials are poisonous and carcinogenic; in a weird alternate history, though, they emit strange rays. The inevitable zombies might be radiation casualties who live nearby . . . or who drink the water miles downstream. Since Henri Becquerel and Marie Curie didn't explain radiation until the late 1890s, it's extremely unlikely that anyone will see this as anything but a curse.

One spring day in 1838, a woman named Black Cat Mama Couteax came out of the Louisiana swamps and into the city of New Orleans. She did not come alone. Instead, she brought an army with her – any army of zombies.

– Diane Bailey, **Zombies in America**

Book Learnin': This is a take on *Overpopulation, Overconsumption, and Pollution* (**Zombies,** p. 9), with an emphasis on pollution. The GM could easily fold in a narrative about white men despoiling the land and angering native spirits; however, the zombies aren't supernatural, but a consequence of *Radiation* (**Zombies,** p. 23). Radiation ghouls (**Zombies,** pp. 90-91) work as written for these undead. Be aware that their Background Radiation ability (**Zombies,** p. 53) causes irreversible harm that 19th-century medicine cannot treat, so such zombies best suit either a one-off campaign or one that includes friendly medicine men with miraculous healing (or snake oil, pp. 27-28, that actually works!).

Too Deep, Too

Blasting (*Too Deep,* pp. 28-29) doesn't have to be about radioactive zombies. As *Burial Grounds* (p. 25) notes, it might disturb sacred native funerary sites. But explosives can delve deeper than the deepest manmade graves and disturb the rest of entities that were never alive. They might awaken Things Man Was Not Meant To Know. After all, H.P. Lovecraft and his successors were happy to pervert Native American mythology for their stories . . . Ithaqua, anyone? How about Zvilpogghua?

And wherever there are TMWNMTK, there are lesser abominations. Like zombies.

Lightin' the Fuse: Any massive explosion might awaken a force best left to sleep. The usual mining and construction possibilities work – but during the Civil War (1861-1865), don't overlook such possibilities as an arsenal going up (a common enough occurrence) or a sapping operation involving tons of good ol' gunpowder. The supernatural consequences could be invisible, the Thing sending up its baleful influence from below to corrupt the living or wake the dead. Still, there's something to be said for the victims exposing a huge underground cavern, glimpsing the Thing, and having their minds blown all the way to zombie-dom.

Book Learnin': Many kinds of supernatural zombies can work – but Can Be Turned By True Faith (**Zombies,** p. 66) *shouldn't* work, as these beings aren't driven by the sort of conventional evil that holy folk oppose. This precludes Functions and Detects as Evil (**Zombies,** p. 67), too. Undead will be innately malignant and controlled by dark forces: consider selfish dead (**Zombies,** pp. 94-95); anything in *Fantasy Monsters* (**Zombies,** pp. 95-96), with simple Intolerance (The Living) replacing the Unholy Dead meta-trait; or buzzing corpses (**Zombies,** pp. 98-99), for sheer creep factor. Living zombies merely behave malignantly: start from whisperers (**Zombies,** pp. 102-103) or crazies (**Zombies,** pp. 101-102), with their infection made a curse, for victims reprogrammed by madness; begin with possessed thralls (**Zombies,** pp. 94-95) if there's direct control; and note that infesters (**Zombies,** p. 99) can provide creepiness comparable to buzzing corpses. Any of these could draw inspiration from *Divine Displeasure* or *Unhallowed Ground* (**Zombies,** p. 20), and might lead to the sort of apocalypse described in *The Dead Rise* (**Zombies,** p. 24), with the blast site being Ground Zero.

Voodoo Queen

Between West African slaves brought to the American South during the 18th century, people fleeing the Haitian Revolution of 1791-1804, and the tacit tolerance of traditional beliefs by Creole culture (if only as a calculated way to keep the peace), Vodou managed to secure a foothold in 19th-century Louisiana. African, West Indian, and even Catholic elements mingled in the local tradition, "Louisiana Voodoo." Charms and potions were sold and used openly, and much of the market for these items – and for services such as divination and exorcism – was white. Voodoo touched all walks of life.

The leaders of this community, women known as "Voodoo queens," directed rituals and made a living producing amulets and concoctions – measures as often calculated to curse enemies as to protect the user. The most notable of the Voodoo queens was Marie Laveau of New Orleans, who reached the height of her powers in the 1830s. While best-known as an oracle and exorcist, she was also *feared;* the word "zombie" *was* uttered in the same breath as her name. She was also seen walking around New Orleans after her death in 1881. Her reign passed to her daughter, who presided over Voodoo ceremonies with thousands of people of all colors in attendance.

Evidence of Laveau-tradition Voodoo in San Francisco suggests that it traversed the intervening 1,900 miles; rumors (possibly apocryphal!) that it turned up in Tombstone, Arizona are consistent with this. Certainly, leaders in the antebellum South feared slave-free territories on their western flank, and black migration westward was instrumental in their concerns. And of course not all Voodoo practitioners were people of color. Settlers from Louisiana doubtless brought along their culture, including Voodoo . . . and perhaps zombies.

Lightin' the Fuse: At any point in the Wild West period, a Voodoo queen – possibly one of those whom Laveau overthrew to cement her reign – *might* turn up along a major coach or rail route on her way to a big city, probably San Francisco. Her retinue, if any, may include zombie servants.

Tolerance wasn't a virtue of the American West; a racist or sexist comment from the locals, or a religious attack from their hellfire preacher (*The Man Comes Around,* p. 28), would be all it takes to bring down a Voodoo curse.

Book Learnin': Voodoo zombies are usually enslaved living people – the stats for Vodou slaves (**Zombies,** p. 102) work as written. The GM interested in posing a more supernatural threat than *Mind-Altering Drugs* (**Zombies,** p. 23) might apply *Black Magic* (**Zombies,** p. 22). This could result in possessed thralls (**Zombies,** pp. 94-95) ridden by Lwa, or reanimated corpses (**Zombies,** pp. 100-101) that use the "Alchemical Animates" option (**Zombies,** p. 100) to represent Voodoo potions. Infectious, flesh-eating hordes aren't fitting, but until the Voodoo queen is deposed or appeased, she may continue to "recruit" new servitors from the local populace and/or graveyards.

War Wights

The systematic extermination of natives by white men was North America's deadliest *slaughter,* but the American Civil War (1861-1865) was its bloodiest *armed conflict.* Military casualties alone were between 620,000 and 850,000, and civilian deaths brought the total to over a million. Though the greatest battles occurred Back East, the Trans-Mississippi Theater saw its share of fighting – particularly in Texas, the Indian Territory (today's Oklahoma), New Mexico, and Arizona.

It would be fair to describe the Civil War as a meeting between Napoleonic tactics (older tactics, for native troops) and modern weaponry: rifled firearms, metallic cartridges, repeating small arms, mechanical machine guns, and even primitive landmines ("torpedoes") and impact-fused hand grenades, not to mention a high density of field artillery. The result? Bulk-rate killing. Even in the considerably smaller battles in the Wild West, bodies piled high and proper burial had to wait, if it came at all. If supernatural horror involving untimely death plays the odds, then statistically, there's no better opportunity for it to show up in 19th-century America.

Lightin' the Fuse: Small groups of soldiers could clash anywhere and wreak death on one another with their high-tech hardware. If they suspect some town or native band of collaborating with the enemy, there's liable to be a massacre – and mature TL5 weaponry is up to the challenge. This is a recipe for restless, vengeance-seeking undead if the Wild West is even a little weird. For mixed horror, remember that roughly 2/3 of the casualties were due to disease (*Fever!,* p. 26) and that the era's medicine sometimes made things worse (*Snake Oil,* pp. 27-28). After the Civil War, the weaponry grows even deadlier and is used to slaughter Navajo, Paiute, Lakota, Cheyenne, Comanche, Shoshone, Ute, Sioux, and almost everybody else, with consequences that might resemble *Bad Medicine* (pp. 24-25) or *Burial Grounds* (p. 25).

Book Learnin': War dead customarily rise as Inexorable (**Zombies,** pp. 69-70) undead with the Intact Corpse meta-trait (**Zombies,** pp. 68-69) – but the selfish dead (**Zombies,** pp. 94-95) and even lurchers (**Zombies,** p. 96) could fit. What motivates these zombies varies, but it's typically either divine displeasure over warfare or unfinished business on the part of the soldiers; see **Zombies,** p. 20. An especially scary feature of Civil War zombies, especially the smarter kind, is that many are trained soldiers packing serious firepower. Thankfully, they are unlikely to be Infectious, and – being cursed – likely to be repelled by the powers of preachers and medicine men.

About the Author

Sean "Dr. Kromm" Punch set out to become a particle physicist in 1985, ended up the **GURPS** Line Editor in 1995, and has engineered rules for almost every **GURPS** product since. He developed, edited, or wrote dozens of **GURPS** *Third Edition* projects between 1995 and 2002. In 2004, he produced the **GURPS Basic Set,** *Fourth Edition* with David Pulver. Since then, he has created **GURPS Powers** (with Phil Masters), **GURPS Martial Arts** (with Peter Dell'Orto), **GURPS Zombies,** and the **GURPS Action, GURPS Dungeon Fantasy,** and **GURPS Power-Ups** series . . . among other things. Sean has been a gamer since 1979. His non-gaming interests include cinema, mixology, and Argentine tango.

FAMOUS WILD WEST GUNFIGHTS

BY HANS-CHRISTIAN VORTISCH

But these bloodthirsty scoundrels complain of the revolver. It kills, but not immediately; its bullet is too small to paralyse; the victim dies by internal bleeding, but not before he has time to discharge his own battery. Hence those extraordinary encounters in the Western and Southern States, where a whole volley of shots is discharged before one of the wretched combatants succumbs.

– Daily Telegraph (1869)

The Wild West saw many famous gunfights, and **GURPS** is uniquely equipped to represent these and similar feats of realistic triggernometry. One of the most famous is the Shootout at the O.K. Corral, which is detailed for **GURPS Third Edition** in **GURPS Old West** (pp. 105-107). This article examines six other gunfights – three historical and three fictional – in similar detail, using **GURPS** Fourth Edition and **GURPS Tactical Shooting.** These worked examples should allow you to get a good grip on the combat options available to the Wild West gunfighter.

Included are spoilers for the films *Appaloosa* (Ed Harris, 2008), *The Shootist* (Don Siegel, 1976), and *Unforgiven* (Clint Eastwood, 1992).

Conflict follows wrongdoing as surely as flies follow the herd.

– Doc Holiday

HICKOK-TUTT SHOOTOUT (TWO SHOTS)

Whenever you get into a row be sure and not shoot too quick. Take time. I've known many a feller slip up for shootin' in a hurry.
– "Wild Bill" Hickok, interview in
Harper's New Monthly Magazine (1865)

This was one of the few classic duels in recorded Wild West history, and supposedly the first fast-draw contest. It's also relevant because of the extreme distance between the shooters (**Tactical Shooting,** pp. 9-10).

"Wild Bill" Hickok (**Old West,** p. 101) and Davis Tutt had fallen out over a watch that Tutt had taken from Hickok in payment for an alleged gambling debt. Tutt planned to wear the watch provocatively on the town square, which led to Hickok's challenge that Tutt "shouldn't pack that watch across the square unless dead men could walk." On July 21, 1865, at 6:00 p.m., the two men faced each other diagonally across the 80-by-80-yard town square of Springfield, Missouri, a distance of some 75 yards (some sources claim 50 or 100 yards, but 75 seems most likely given their reported positions). Their muzzle-loading revolvers were capped and holstered. Hickok probably carried two Colt .36 Navy revolvers (**GURPS High-Tech: Adventure Guns,** p. 10); while he didn't get his famous ivory-handled Navys until 1869, he favored that model at least from 1867, and is likely to have used it before that. Tutt's sidearms aren't recorded. Both men drew; Hickok, "as cool as an alligator" throughout according to his first biographer, took time to steady the Colt on his left arm. Both men fired "almost" simultaneously, although witnesses at the trial afterward maintained that Tutt fired first.

Turn 1: Tutt takes a Ready maneuver to draw and cock his right-hand revolver. Hickok succeeds with a Fast-Draw (Pistol) roll, instantly readying his right-hand revolver (**GURPS High-Tech,** p. 81). He takes an Aim maneuver, additionally bracing the revolver (p. B364).

Turn 2: Tutt takes an All-Out Attack (Determined) maneuver and fires a sighted shot (**Tactical Shooting,** p. 13) at Hickok: -10 (range) +1 (All-Out Attack) = -9 to Guns (Pistol). His shot misses. Hickok takes an All-Out Attack (Determined) and fires an aimed shot (**Tactical Shooting,** p. 14) at -10 (range) +1 (All-Out Attack) +2 (Acc) +1 (braced) = -6. Hickok hits Tutt in the torso and scores a "1" on the body hit (**High-Tech,** p. 162), piercing the heart – a mortal wound.

Turn 3: Hickok turns around, pointing his revolver at the bystanders behind him. As his dying action (p. B423), Tutt exclaims, "Boys, I'm killed" and staggers inside one of the archways of the court house, around a column, and back into the street again. Then he collapses unconscious.

Tutt died less than two minutes later.

Big Whiskey Massacre (12 Shots)

I was lucky in the order, but I've always been lucky when it comes to killing folks.

– William Munny, **Unforgiven**

In *Unforgiven*, Will Munny learned that Sheriff "Little Bill" Daggett had killed Munny's friend. After having finished off a bottle of whiskey late one evening in 1880, he came to the dim-lit, crowded saloon of Big Whiskey, Wyoming, confronting the sheriff and his posse. Daggett and his deputies Clyde Ledbetter, "Fatty" Rossiter, Andy Russell, and Charley Hecker were armed with Colt .45 SAA Cavalry revolvers (**Adventure Guns,** pp. 14-15). Munny carried a S&W .45 Schofield revolver (**Adventure Guns,** pp. 13-14) and a 10-gauge W. Richards shotgun (**Adventure Guns,** p. 22) sawed-off to coach gun size (**Adventure Guns,** p. 21). Munny first blasted the saloon-keeper with the right barrel from his shotgun. He cocked the left hammer and turned the gun on the sheriff standing in front of him before explaining himself.

Turn 1: Munny takes an All-Out Attack (Determined) maneuver to fire the left barrel at Daggett. As he squeezes the second trigger, the gun and/or ammunition malfunctions and doesn't fire (p. B407).

Turn 2: Everybody takes a Do Nothing maneuver, being mentally stunned (p. B420). Daggett rasps, "Misfire!"

Turn 3: Daggett takes a Ready maneuver and draws his revolver, shouting, "Kill the son of a –!" Munny takes an Attack maneuver to throw the useless shotgun at Daggett.

Turn 4: Munny takes a Ready maneuver to draw and cock his revolver. Daggett takes a Ready maneuver to cock the hammer of his revolver.

Turn 5: Daggett fires first, taking an Attack maneuver with an unsighted hip shot (**Tactical Shooting,** pp. 11, 13) at Munny, who crouches (p. B368): -2 (range) -2 (crouching) -2 (darkness) = -6 to Guns (Pistol). Daggett's shot misses. Munny takes an All-Out Attack (Determined) maneuver firing a sighted shot at Daggett: -2 (range) +1 (All-Out Attack) -2 (darkness) -1 (tipsy) = -4. Munny hits Daggett in the torso. Ledbetter to the left of Munny takes a Ready maneuver to draw and cock his revolver.

Turn 6: Daggett fires a wild shot into the ceiling and collapses unconscious. Ledbetter takes an All-Out Attack (Determined) maneuver firing a sighted shot at Munny: -2 (range) +1 (All-Out Attack) -2 (crouching) -2 (darkness) = -5. Ledbetter's shot misses. Russell, mentally stunned, takes a Do Nothing maneuver and stares at the fallen Daggett. Rossiter takes a Ready maneuver to draw and cock his revolver. Hecker takes a Do Nothing maneuver, clearly having failed a Fright Check (**Tactical Shooting,** p. 34). Munny takes an Attack maneuver, swiveling around and firing an unsighted shot at Ledbetter: -2 (range) -2 (darkness) -1 (tipsy) = -5. Munny hits Ledbetter in the torso; Ledbetter collapses, unconscious.

Turn 7: Russell takes a Ready maneuver to draw and cock his revolver. Rossiter takes an Attack maneuver and fans (**Tactical Shooting,** p. 14) two unsighted hip shots at Munny: -2 (range) -4 (fanning) -2 (darkness) = -8. Both shots miss.

Turn 8: Munny fires a sighted shot at Russell, missing him. Russell fires a sighted shot at Munny, also missing. Rossiter fires an unsighted hip shot at Munny, missing.

Turn 9: Munny takes an All-Out Attack (Determined) maneuver firing a sighted shot at Russell: -2 (range) +1 (All-Out Attack) -2 (darkness) -1 (tipsy) = -4. Munny hits Russell in the torso, possibly in the vitals. Russell collapses unconscious. Rossiter takes a Move maneuver and flees to Munny's right, firing off another shot into the ceiling.

Turn 10: Hecker takes a Move maneuver, fleeing out of the back of the establishment. Munny takes an All-Out Attack (Determined) maneuver with a sighted shot at the fleeing Rossiter: -3 (range) +1 (All-Out Attack) -2 (darkness) -1 (tipsy) = -5. Munny hits Rossiter in the back torso; Rossiter collapses unconscious.

Note that this isn't a second-by-second account of the 30-second film sequence, since some time is spent catching the expressions of various characters and showing several events sequentially that actually unfold simultaneously.

Four Dead in Five Seconds Gunfight (Eight Shots)

This was one of the shortest recorded firefights and one of the deadliest – although strictly speaking, most casualties didn't die in those five seconds but much later. It illustrates the necessity to identify friend and foe (**Tactical Shooting,** p. 11).

Around 6:00 p.m. on April 11, 1881, George Campbell and John Hale, both intoxicated, accosted Constable Gus Krempkau on El Paso Street in El Paso, Texas, arguing over Krempkau's role in a court hearing. Hale was unarmed, but Campbell carried two holstered Colt .45 SAA revolvers. Krempkau's sidearm is unrecorded, but considering that he fired four shots in a few seconds, he's likely to have carried a double-action weapon such as the Colt .41 D.A. "Thunderer" (**Adventure Guns,** p. 15). Town Marshal Dallas Stoudenmire, armed with two S&W No.3 .44 American revolvers (**Adventure Guns,** p. 13) and a converted Colt .44 Army backup revolver (**Adventure Guns,** p. 12), was eating dinner at a nearby restaurant.

Turn 1: Hale takes a Ready maneuver to grab and cock a revolver from Campbell's holster, yelling, "George, I've got you covered."

Turn 2: Hale takes an Attack maneuver and fires an unsighted shot at Krempkau: -1 (range) -2 (drunk) = -3 to Guns (Pistol). Hale hits Krempkau in the torso and scores a "1" on the body hit, piercing the lungs. Krempkau is stunned from his mortal wound, reeling backward and slumping against a doorframe.

Turn 3: Stoudenmire takes a Ready maneuver, stepping away from his table while simultaneously drawing and cocking his two S&W .44 revolvers. Krempkau takes a Do Nothing maneuver and recovers from stun.

Turn 4: Stoudenmire takes a Move and Attack maneuver, rushing out on the street and firing an unsighted shot at a moving figure, at -2 (range) -2 (Move and Attack) = -4. Stoudenmire hits Juan Ochoa in the back of the torso. Ochoa, an innocent bystander trying to get out of the way, collapses unconscious. Stoudenmire has clearly failed his Per roll to correctly assess the situation. Campbell takes a Ready maneuver to draw his remaining revolver. Krempkau takes a Ready maneuver to draw his revolver.

Turn 5: Stoudenmire takes an All-Out Attack (Determined) maneuver to take a sighted shot at Hale who is peeking from behind a pillar: -2 (range) -4 (heavy cover) +1 (All-Out Attack) = -5. Stoudenmire hits Hale between the eyes, scoring a "1" on the face hit (***Tactical Shooting,*** p. 16), penetrating into the skull. Hale collapses, instantly dead. Campbell takes a Wait maneuver to shout, "Gentlemen, this is not my fight!" but unadvisedly waves his revolver around. Krempkau, on the ground, takes an All-Out Attack (Determined) maneuver to take two sighted shots at Campbell: -1 (range) +1 (All-Out Attack) = 0. Krempkau hits Campbell once in the right wrist and once in the foot – results so random that obviously the *Hit Locations Table* (p. B552) has been used. The shot to the wrist is a crippling injury to the hand (p. B421), and Campbell drops his revolver.

Turn 6: Campbell takes a Ready maneuver to stoop down and pick up the revolver with his uninjured left hand. Krempkau fires two more shots at Campbell, which both miss. Stoudenmire takes an Attack maneuver, turning to fire an unsighted shot at Campbell: -2 (range). Stoudenmire hits Campbell in the torso; Campbell is knocked down, dropping his revolver.

Turn 7: Stoudenmire moves toward Campbell, revolvers trained on him. Campbell exclaims, "You big son of a –! You murdered me!"

Krempkau died shortly thereafter. Ochoa and the gut-shot Campbell expired the next day.

There stood Johnnie Hale, with his Colt vaguely menacing the air before him, a wreath of blue smoke filtering up from the muzzle. Krempkau was on the ground, stone-dead.

– Eugene Cunningham,
Triggernometry

Shootout at Rio Seco (19 Shots)

Everett Hitch: That happened quick.
Virgil Cole: Everybody could shoot.

– Appaloosa

In *Appaloosa*, Appaloosa Town Marshal Virgil Cole and Deputy Everett Hitch faced off in 1882 with crooked Taos County Sheriff Russell, his cousins Ring Shelton and Mackie Shelton, and murderer Randall Bragg in front of the jailhouse of Rio Seco, New Mexico, as the church bell chimed 6:00 p.m. Cole carried a Colt .45 SAA Cavalry revolver and a Colt .45 SAA Artillery backup revolver, while Ring Shelton had a Colt .45 SAA Cavalry and Mackie a Colt .45 SAA Artillery. Hitch was armed with an 8-gauge double-barreled shotgun similar to the Parker Lifter (***Adventure Guns,*** p. 21) and a Colt .44 Open Top revolver (***Adventure Guns,*** p. 14). Russell and Bragg were armed with Winchester Model 1873 short rifles (***Adventure Guns,*** p. 30). All had their guns ready before the shooting started. Cole faced Ring, Hitch faced Mackie, and Russell and Bragg were stationed opposite the lawmen in upstairs windows.

Turn 1: Ring takes an All-Out Attack (Determined) maneuver and fires a sighted shot at Cole: -4 (range) +1 (All-Out Attack) = -3 to Guns (Pistol). His shot misses. Mackie takes an All-Out Attack (Determined) maneuver and fires a sighted shot at Hitch: -4 (range) +1 (All-Out Attack) = -3. His shot misses. Russell takes an Attack maneuver and fires an unsighted hip shot downward (p. B407) at Hitch: -4 (range) +0 (downward) = -4 to Guns (Rifle). His shot misses. Bragg takes an All-Out Attack (Determined) maneuver and fires a sighted shot downward at Cole: -4 (range) +0 (downward) +1 (All-Out Attack) = -3. His shot misses. Cole and Hitch each take a Ready maneuver, stepping and raising their weapons.

Turn 2: Ring takes an All-Out Attack (Determined) maneuver and fires a sighted shot at Cole: -4 (range) +1 (All-Out Attack) = -3. Ring hits Cole in the torso, but it isn't a major wound. Hitch takes an All-Out Attack (Determined) maneuver and fires a sighted shot at Mackie: -4 (range) +1 (All-Out Attack) +3 (15 buckshot pellets) = 0 to Guns (Shotgun). His shot misses. Everybody else continues to shoot as well, but misses.

Turn 3: Cole takes an All-Out Attack (Determined) maneuver and fires a sighted shot at Ring: -4 (range) +1 (All-Out Attack) -4 (shock) = -7. Cole hits Ring in the torso; Ring collapses, unconscious. Hitch takes an All-Out Attack (Determined) maneuver and fires a sighted shot at Mackie, giving him the other barrel: -4 (range) +1 (All-Out Attack) +3 (15 buckshot pellets) = 0. Hitch hits Mackie in the torso; Mackie collapses, unconscious. Simultaneously, Mackie takes an All-Out Attack (Determined) maneuver and fires a sighted shot at Hitch: -4 (range) +1 (All-Out Attack) = -3. Mackie hits Hitch in the torso; Hitch is knocked down, dropping his shotgun.

Turn 4: Bragg takes an All-Out Attack (Determined) maneuver and fires a sighted shot downward at Cole: -4 (range) +0 (downward) +1 (All-Out Attack) = -3. Bragg hits Cole in the knee, a crippling injury to the leg (p. B421). Cole falls down. Cole takes an All-Out Attack (Determined) maneuver and fires a sighted shot upward (p. B407) at Russell: -4 (range) -1 (upward) +1 (All-Out Attack) -4 (shock) = -8. Cole hits Russell in the torso; Russell collapses, unconscious. Hitch takes a Do Nothing maneuver and recovers from stun.

Turn 5: Hitch succeeds with a Fast-Draw (Pistol) roll, instantly readying his revolver. He takes an All-Out Attack (Determined) maneuver and fires a sighted shot upward at Bragg: -4 (range) -1 (upward) +1 (All-Out Attack) = -4. His shot misses. Bragg takes a Move maneuver to retreat into the jailhouse.

Turn 6-8: Cole and Hitch reel on the ground while Bragg descends and mounts a horse out of sight.

Turn 9: Hitch takes an All-Out Attack (Determined) maneuver and fires a sighted shot at Bragg as he reappears on a speeding horse: -5 (range) +1 (All-Out Attack) = -4. His shot misses.

Turn 10: Hitch takes an All-Out Attack (Determined) maneuver and fires a sighted shot at Bragg: -6 (range) +1 (All-Out Attack) = -5. He misses.

Turn 11: Hitch takes an Aim maneuver.

Turn 12: Hitch takes an All-Out Attack (Determined) maneuver and fires a sighted shot at Bragg: -7 (range) +1 (All-Out Attack) +2 (Acc) = -4. He misses, and Bragg escapes.

This isn't a second-by-second account of the 18-second film sequence, as the scene shows several actions sequentially that unfold simultaneously.

BOOKS' LAST STAND (10 SHOTS)

It isn't always being fast, or even accurate, that counts. It's being willing.

– John Books, **The Shootist**

In *The Shootist,* gunfighter John Books arranged to meet his foes in a Carson City, Nevada, saloon on January 29, 1901, at 11:00 a.m. Books carried two Colt .45 SAA Civilian revolvers, one in his holster and another tucked in the belt. Jay Cobb and Mike Sweeney were armed with Colt .45 SAA Artillery revolvers. Jack Pulford carried a long-barreled S&W .38 Safety Hammerless revolver (**High-Tech,** p. 95). Books ordered a drink and emptied his glass, noting all three men while entering and in the mirrors while standing at the bar. His opponents sat at tables around the large room.

Turn 1: Cobb takes a Change Posture maneuver, getting up from his chair. Books makes his Per roll to notice the movement, and takes a Wait maneuver to dive prone before being attacked (per **Tactical Shooting,** p. 17).

Turn 2: Cobb succeeds with a Fast-Draw (Pistol) roll, instantly readying his revolver. Cobb takes an All-Out Attack (Determined) maneuver and fires a sighted shot at Books: -3 (range) +1 (All-Out Attack) = -2 to Guns (Pistol). His shot misses as Books makes a successful Dodge and Drop (p. B377) by diving over the bar counter.

Turn 3: Books takes a Ready maneuver to pick up a bottle.

Turn 4: Books takes an Attack maneuver to throw the bottle over the bar as a diversion (p. B405).

Turn 5: Books succeeds with a Fast-Draw (Pistol) roll, instantly readying his belt revolver. Books takes a Pop-Up Attack maneuver (p. B390) and fires an unsighted shot at Cobb: -3 (range) -2 (Pop-Up Attack) = -5. Books hits Cobb in the torso; Cobb is knocked down but keeps his revolver (despite p. B420).

Turn 6: Cobb and Books both take a Change Posture maneuver to stand up.

Turn 7: Cobb takes a Move and Attack maneuver to make two steps to his left and point his revolver at Books. Books takes a Wait maneuver to transform into an All-Out Attack (Determined), firing a sighted shot at Cobb before he can: -3 (range) +1 (All-Out Attack) = -2. Books hits Cobb in the torso; Cobb collapses, unconscious.

Turn 8: Sweeney, who has his revolver ready on the table, takes an Attack maneuver and fires an unsighted shot at Books behind the bar: -2 (range) -2 (light cover) = -4. Sweeney hits Books in the torso; Books is stunned.

Turn 9: Books takes a Do Nothing maneuver, recovering from stun.

Turn 10: Books takes an Attack maneuver, firing an unsighted shot at Sweeney: -2 (range) = -2. Books hits Sweeney in the right arm; Sweeney drops his revolver.

Turn 11: Sweeney takes a Ready maneuver to pick up the table as a shield. Books takes a Ready maneuver to switch his revolver to the left hand and draw and cock his holstered revolver with the right hand.

Turn 12: Sweeney takes a Move maneuver, walking forward behind the table (cover DR 1*). Books takes a Dual-Weapon Attack maneuver (p. B417) to fire an unsighted shot from each revolver using the Dual-Weapon Attack technique (**Tactical Shooting,** p. 44) *through* the table (p. B408) at Sweeney: -2 (range) -0 (Dual-Weapon Attack) -2 (shooting through cover) = -4 for the right hand, -2 (range) -4 (Dual-Weapon Attack) -2 (shooting through cover) = -8 for the left hand.

*What followed was a kind of gunman's opera, mostly comedic,
the players performing with jangled nerves under a cloud of hot smoke.*
– ***True Tales and Amazing Legends of the Old West:
From True West Magazine***

Books hits Sweeney twice in the torso. Sweeney is mortally wounded, but still has a dying action.

Turn 13: Books takes an All-Out Attack (Determined) maneuver, firing a sighted shot from his right-hand revolver at Sweeney: -1 (range) +1 (All-Out Attack) -2 (shooting through cover) = -2. Sweeney is hit a third time in the torso. Sweeney takes a Move maneuver to make a step, drop the table, and scream: "And I'll tell you that was for Albert!" Then he collapses, dead.

Turn 14: Pulford succeeds with a Fast-Draw (Pistol) roll, instantly readying his revolver. He takes an Attack maneuver, simultaneously throwing a deck of cards with his left hand as a diversion and firing an unsighted hip shot at Books behind the bar: -4 (range) -2 (light cover) = -6. Pulford hits Books in the left arm. Books is knocked down and drops his left-hand revolver, but not the right-hand one.

Turn 15-17: Pulford takes several Move maneuvers, dashing from cover to cover through the saloon to the bar.

Turn 18: Pulford takes a Move maneuver, scooting on his knees on the far side of the bar. Books succeeds with a Per roll to spy Pulford's reflection in a glass on the bar.

Turn 19: Pulford takes a Move maneuver, still on his knees. Books takes a Change Posture maneuver and lies prone.

Turn 20: Pulford takes a Move maneuver, going along on his knees, almost rounding the end of the bar. Books takes a Wait and Aim maneuver for Opportunity Fire (p. B390) at the hex at the end of the bar.

Turn 21: Books takes a Wait maneuver covering the bar end, to transform into an All-Out Attack (Determined), firing a sighted shot at Pulford as he peeks around the bar, his arm braced on the floor (p. B364): -1 (range) +1 (All-Out Attack) +2 (Acc) +1 (braced) -5 (hit location) = -2. Books hits Pulford between the eyes and scores a "1" on the face hit, penetrating into the skull. Pulford collapses, dead.

This isn't a second-by-second account of the 68-second film sequence, as the scene shows several simultaneous actions sequentially.

Canyon Diablo Shootout (21 Shots)

This gunfight occurred at extremely short distance (***Tactical Shooting,*** pp. 9-10), and four men completely emptied their weapons, yet only a few bullets found their mark, indicating mediocre marksmanship (***Tactical Shooting,*** p. 42).

On April 8, 1905, Navajo County Sheriff Chet Houck and Deputy Pete Pemberton arrived in Canyon Diablo, Nevada, in search of two small-time robbers, William Evans and John Shaw. Around 7:00 p.m., before sundown, they hailed the two men on Hell Street, the main thoroughfare of Canyon Diablo.

Sheriff Houck called out for them to stop, whereupon the two men turned to face the officers and one of them said: "No one searches us!" Then all hell broke loose as the four went for their revolvers. Houck is reported to have carried a .38-caliber revolver, possibly a double-action design like the Colt .38 D.A. "Lightning" (***Adventure Guns,*** p. 15) or Colt .38 New Army & Navy (***Adventure Guns,*** p. 17), the others probably had Colt .45 SAA models. Houck, Evans, and Shaw had only "five beans in the wheel" (***High-Tech,*** p. 93); Pemberton had loaded six.

Turn 1: All four men take Ready maneuvers to draw and cock their revolvers.

Turn 2: Houck takes an Attack maneuver and fires two unsighted hip shots at Shaw: -1 (range) = -1 to Guns (Pistol). Both shots miss. Pemberton takes an Attack maneuver and fans three unsighted hip shots at Evans: -1 (range) -6 (fanning) = -7. All three miss. Shaw takes an Attack maneuver and fans two unsighted hip shots at Houck: -1 (range) -4 (fanning) = -5. Both miss. Evans does the same, shooting at Pemberton instead. Both miss.

Turn 3: Houck takes an Attack maneuver and fires two unsighted hip shots at Shaw: -1 (range) = -1. Both shots miss. Pemberton takes an Attack maneuver and fans two unsighted hip shots at Evans: -1 (range) -4 (fanning) = -5. Pemberton hits Evans once in the left leg, a crippling injury, and Evans falls down. Shaw takes an Attack maneuver and fans three unsighted hip shots at Houck: -1 (range) -6 (fanning) = -7. All three miss. Evans takes an Attack maneuver and fans two unsighted hip shots at Pemberton while dropping: -1 (range) -4 (fanning) -4 (shock) = -9. Both miss.

Turn 4: Shaw looks at his empty revolver and takes a Ready maneuver to reload it. Houck takes an All-Out Attack (Determined) maneuver, stepping to close the distance to shoot Shaw in the head with his last shot: 0 (range) +1 (All-Out Attack) -5 (hit location) = -4. Houck hits Shaw in the head and scores a "1" on the face hit, penetrating into the skull. Shaw collapses, instantly dead. Evans takes an All-Out Attack (Determined) from the ground and fires a sighted shot at Houck: 0 (range) +1 (All-Out Attack) -4 (shock) = -3. His last shot goes through Houck's coat and grazes his stomach, but does no damage, likely due to Luck. Pemberton takes an All-Out Attack (Determined) and fires a sighted shot at Evans: -1 (range) +1 (All-Out Attack) = 0. Pemberton's last shot hits Evans in the torso, and the latter is knocked down, dropping his revolver.

About the Author

Random Thought Table

Little Bits of the West

by Steven Marsh, *Pyramid* Editor

The Wild West is cool, and a century of popular culture has shaped our view of what the Western genre can be. From a postmodern perspective, perhaps the coolest thing about the West is that its core ideas are so easily portable to other genres or settings. Modern-day media such as *No Country for Old Men* and *Breaking Bad* draw on Western influences. A lightning bug once told me it's even possible to have a "Western in space." And I've run a "Western in a fantasy world." There's even a TV Tropes web page devoted to the "New Old West" – don't read it now unless you want to be sucked into the Tropes vortex for umpteen hours.

However, one of the fun things we can do at *Pyramid* is to break down larger ideas into smaller elements. In this case, what can we crib from the Western form to add to our games *without* (necessarily) slapping a cowboy hat on another genre? Let's toss this genre into the particle accelerator, and see what falls out.

Three key features that can add the Wild West to any campaign.

Location, Location, Location

The notion of the Western town is vivid in many folks' memories. But what makes such a place so fertile for adventure? Forget adding cacti; let's see how we can turn a locale into something *truly* Western-flavored.

One interesting aspect of a typical Western town is how it straddles the line of so many extremes. It's generally not totally removed from civilization – like an outpost camp or an orbital satellite – but it's also not very close to the Big City. If a railroad-like transport is available, a couple of days to a week would feel right to make it to the larger world. (Not surprisingly, "a few days to a week" is the rough duration that backup from the Federation always seemed to take in most of the Star Trek series.)

It's not just a matter of the interval to get to the rest of the world. It's also the cost – in time, money, resources, or the like. Returning to more civilized realms should feel *possible* but not *easy*.

Similarly, this relative remoteness leads to controlled resources. Luxury items, medicine, supplies, and news can come from the Big City, but these are also limited by the week-or-so turnaround.

Meanwhile, something draws people to the Western locale. This is usually a rare or desired resource (gold, oil, diamonds, etc.), although it could be the land itself or the hope of a new life . . . particularly if the old world has problems such as famine or poverty that drive folks outward.

So, let's brainstorm a few locales that draw on these elements.

Fantasy: We could plunk our town seven days away from Londinium and call it good, but let's think a bit more creatively. Crystallisle is a small outpost city of about 350 people, whose primary purpose is to serve as an organizational locale to gather manacrys, a highly magical crystal that aids in enchantment. What makes Crystallisle unusual is that it exists *in the same spot* as the largest city in this fantasy world – however, it's on an alternate plane from the metropolis. Shifting to or from that realm takes a significant amount of magic.

Modern Day: Oldshore is a small town in Glades County, Florida, on the western edge of Lake Okeechobee in the south-central part of the state. It's about an hour drive from Cape Coral, two hours from Miami, and 2.5 hours from Orlando. Although there's long been occasional rumors of Fortean events in the area, a recent upsurge has brought investigators, entrepreneurs, charlatans, and opportunists to the city, swelling a native population of 1,000 to just over 1,200 in the past year. As more people poke the area looking for things perhaps Humanity Was Not Meant to Know – an hour-plus from any city of significance – tension has arisen from the locals, who struggle to balance get-rich-quick opportunities with a desire to be left alone. *(Oldshore is a fictional town that's roughly in the same spot as the real-world Moore Haven, population 1,750.)*

Science fiction: The Apollo missions took three days to get to the moon, but it's pretty much the prototypical example of "pain in the butt" to get a trip together. Even when we start making more lunar trips and speed that up, it's likely to be an expensive, challenging affair. ("Before Austin Central spends $13.8 million to get Serum X to you . . . how sick are they, *really?*") Assuming we find a good reason to be on the Moon – it seems unlikely we'll go there to mine calcium for the homeworld – and assuming one or more colonies have some degree of self-selectiveness and autonomy, it's quite possible those space towns will have elements that resemble an old Western town.

Justice . . . or Just Us?

Another aspect of the Western genre ripe to be plugged into other gaming realms is its sense of justice. On the whole, a larger legal code is generally in effect for Western-flavored locales; many stories focus on claims, treaties, contracts, and the like. However, the details of that law are often spotty, non-existent, and/or in the hands of a small number of honorable (or not-so-honorable) folks. Sure, this deed may *say* you own Glitter Gold Gulch, but if it's the only copy and you're found at the bottom of a ravine . . .

Let's see how we can break that down for new purposes.

One aspect of the Western sense of justice that's pretty obvious is that justice is often in the hands of the *people* (and especially would-be victims); in other words, if you're in charge of keeping the ranch safe, then you're the first line of defense. Less obvious is that the *outcome* of that enforcement is sanctioned. Thus, modern society generally allows harming someone else in self-defense, but someone who resorts to lethal force – even justified – is likely to have their lives turned upside-down for weeks/months/years as the courts (and public opinion) work to ensure that force was justified. In comparison, the Wild West outlook is *much* quicker; if someone needed killin' and dies doing Something Evil, then the town is likely to shrug and go about its business. (Of course, this same "justice" often ensures that less-scrupulous swift guns can go about their deadly trade for a long time before getting their comeuppance . . .)

Another aspect of Western-style justice is the notion of the deputy, marshal, or other entity who is in charge of keeping the peace and enforcing the law. The notion of PCs as marshals is omnipresent, but it can make a nice change of pace to have non-law-enforcing heroes run into area lawkeepers in their neck of the woods, either as an antagonistic force ("we don't get many strangers around here") or as a source of backup if things go afoul.

One idea we can cull here for our own gaming is to play with notions of accountability and enforcement. While it may be assumed that the crypt-crawling heroes in a dungeon-fantasy world have the legal authority to loot trapped tombs and kill the inhabitants, it might be a fun twist to make that explicit: *Only* the heroes (and other dungeon-delvers) have the legal authority to do dungeon-delving. Possible complications:

● If the heroes come across outsiders who aren't similarly empowered, they're expected to mete justice on the interlopers.
● Similarly, if the power is vested in heroes because they're considered responsible in the usage of their abilities, then they'll be held accountable if they stir up trouble they *can't* control. (It adds an extra air of excitement if the heroes are reluctant to run away from a kobold camp they fear they can't handle if they know that The Law will be after them for starting a situation they couldn't finish.)

Playing with such power structures can also add excitement to more traditional fantasy worlds. One interesting aspect of the computer RPG *Avadon: The Black Fortress* (Spiderweb Software) is that the PCs have the full weight of the (powerful) empire on their side; they can – in theory – act as judge, jury, and executioner in any situation. (The game doesn't quite live up to that promise, but it's still fun when it *does* play with the idea.) This takes the idea of the town marshal's powers and responsibilities, and gives the heroes the reach of an entire game world.

As a final idea that can be applied to many genres, one aspect of frontier justice is that the new society is forging its own destiny. Players with a world-building bent might be interested in trying to craft a legal code for the new settlement (especially if it differs wildly from the land the settlers left behind). Some ideas:

● The settled area is so dangerous everyone is expected to aid anyone in peril, *including* placing yourself at risk.
● The MacGuffin that encourages people to settle is valuable or dangerous enough that property rights are supreme above all other rights.
● Injustice and the suffering of victims were significant enough problems in the Old World that serious situations have a "preponderance of evidence" determination of guilt instead of the old standard of "reasonable doubt."

Tech

One aspect that often appears subtly in the Wild West ideal is the role of technology. Westerns employ some tech that is both tried-and-true and yet still uncertain in its outcome. Looking back, we know now the effects that fast transportation (trains), rapid communication (telegraphs), personal weapons (firearms/revolvers), and mass media (pulps and cheap newspapers) would have on the world. However, at the time, the eventual endgame for these innovations must have seemed in doubt.

To add a Western flair to a game world, consider concocting technologies that serve as analogs to the new-ish tech of the West. Any mass improvement in bookmaking or publishing would be of extreme interest to many fantasy worlds, while FTLegraph might be an expensive dot-and-dash communication method to put the remote space colony in touch with Earth. (See p. 38 in *Pyramid #3/37: Tech and Toys II* for one idea of limited interstellar communication.)

About the Editor

Steven Marsh is a freelance writer and editor. He has contributed to roleplaying game releases from Green Ronin, West End Games, White Wolf, Hogshead Publishing, and others. He has been editing *Pyramid* for over 10 years; during that time, he has won four Origins awards. He lives in Indiana with his wife, Nikola Vrtis, and their son.