

# The Great Weir of North



AARON ROSENBERG



# THE GREAT WEIRD NORTH



BY: AARON ROSENBERG



# The Great Weird North

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*Deadlands* created by Shane Lacy Hensley.

Dedicated to: Jen, who warms my world.

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## BUNDLE UP!

Well, hello there! And welcome to the North! No, I don't mean Yankeeland, I'm talking about the real north: Canada and Alaska.

Don't get up here much, eh? Not to worry—we'll take good care of you. This book is chock full of info about the northern lands up above the Union. We'll cover all of Canada—and believe me, that's a lot of territory to cover!—and even go as far as Alaska, where some mighty interesting things are going on. Find out all about Canada's never-ending winter, the sinister disappearance of settlers in Alaska, and even more ominous shenanigans.

So come on along—bring your waterskin, and your snowshoes, and bundle up. Oh, and watch out for the wendigo!

## USING THIS BOOK

As with most Deadlands books, The Great Weird North is broken into sections. The first one is Posse Territory—that's fair game for anybody to read. It includes the Epitaph's Guide, with a lot of useful facts about Canada and Alaska. There is also a chapter with everything you need to know about making heroes of the North and a small store's worth of new equipment. After that comes the Marshal's Handbook. It fills Marshals in on all the goings on up Canada-way as well as containing rules on cold weather and a whole passel of new abominations.

As always, a Marshal's badge in the margins means there's more info about that topic in the Marshal's Handbook. For you Posse members, don't peek!



# The Epitaph's Guide to the Great Weird North

1879 EDITION

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# THE EPITAPH'S GUIDE TO THE GREAT WEIRD NORTH!



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## CHAPTER ONE: TRUE NORTH

### Introduction by the Author

Welcome back, dear reader! But maybe you should be the one welcoming me, after all. I'm sure you're wondering where your old pal Lacy's been. Well, I decided to take a short vacation. Well, a working vacation, anyway.

You see, a fellow I know was talking to me one afternoon, and mentioned something about the Chillkoot Pass. "Where's that?" says I. "Well, it's up Alaska way," he replied.

Now, I consider myself a well-traveled man, but I had never set foot in Alaska, nor in any of Canada. It occurred to me that you, my loyal reader, probably had not, either. Ignorance is to be combated on all fronts, my grammie used to say (though actually her exact words were "beat the Devil Ignorance back with a stick, boy, or he'll throttle you in your sleep!"), and this was clearly one of those fronts. So I packed up my bags and my notepads—I should have packed a few sets of long underwear, but I don't have much need for them in sunny Arizona—and set out to explore Canada.

Now I've returned, and excluding a few dings, scrapes, and additional gray hairs, I'm still in one piece. It's good to be back! Not that I didn't find my stay in the land to the north pleasant (for the most part), or the inhabitants friendly (again, for the most part), but now that I've returned I can share what I've learned with my loyal readers. So sit

back and prepare to be amazed—there's a whole other country up there! And it's every bit as strange and wonderful as our own, if a darn sight colder.

### Climate and Terrain

Canada (the name, by the way, is a corruption of an Ottawa Indian word, Kanata, which means "villages") has a great deal of variety in its terrain—most of it bad. Large portions of the country are under water, rocky, marshy, or mountainous, and practically uninhabitable. That's probably why, during the War of 1812, cocky American leaders thought conquering Canada would be a "mere matter of marching"—hell, most Canadians live within 200 miles of the Union border, and they're concentrated in a handful of cities. No wonder the British got so antsy this year and decided to invade Detroit as a "precaution" against Union adventurism.

What we tend to forget, of course, is that Canada is huge. We think of the Union and the Confederacy as big countries, but they're nothing compared to Canada. That's why it's hard to make generalizations about its climate or terrain.

Terrain-wise, Canada can be broken into six distinct regions: the Appalachian Region, the Great Lakes and St. Lawrence Lowlands, the Canadian Shield, the Great Plains, the Canadian Cordillera, and the Arctic Archipelago.



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The Appalachian Region is a continuation of the Green Mountains of Vermont and the White Mountains of New Hampshire. The Great Lakes and St. Lawrence Lowlands are a level plain—that's the largest area of good farmland in eastern and central Canada. It's also where Ontario and southern Quebec sit. The Canadian Shield is an area of ancient granite with a thin covering of soil. It's a devil to cross, and almost impossible to live on. The Great Plains are an extension of the plains south of the border—they hold some of the richest soil in the country. The Canadian Cordillera is a vast chain of mountains, including the Rockies and the Selkirk Mountains. The Arctic Archipelago is a collection of Arctic islands north of Hudson's Bay. Each region has its own problems and its own lifestyles—watching someone from the Great Lakes try to survive on the Shield is like watching a New Yorker staking a claim in Fargo.

## Ice Age

Canada's having a bit of a cold front these days, and that's putting it mildly. Ever hear of an Ice Age? That's when the polar ice cap, all the way at the northern tip of the world, starts leaking down south, and glaciers creep across the continents, covering them in ice and snow. These things can last for thousands of years—fortunately, they only show up every few million years or so. And apparently we're overdue.

Seems the trouble started about ten years ago, in the winter of 1866. Nasty winter, everybody says, cold and windy with lots of ice and snow. And it just never really ended.



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You read right. Canada's been in winter for ten years now. Folks say it's another Ice Age, and they may be right. Basically the Arctic's swept down and covered a lot of the country below it.

Would have covered even more, actually—and reached us as well, once it had spread across Canada—but the government stepped in. Way I hear it, they put out a call for help, and got a reply from a name we're already familiar with, Hellstromme. That's right, that crazy inventor decided he couldn't let Britain's second country turn into a giant freezer. It took him two years, but he managed to come up with a solution, a sort of fence to keep the cold out. Don't ask me how, but it works. They call that thing the Winterline, and it fits—I swear you can be in shirt-sleeve weather, walk three steps over that line, and watch your breath freeze in front of you.

Problem is, Hellstromme set up the Winterline to run from major city to major city, coast to coast. And Canada's biggest cities are all to the south, where it was warmer to start. So the Winterline only shields maybe ten percent of the country. Above it, you've got constant winter from sea to sea. That doesn't mean no variety, though. Along the Eastern coast, the ocean brings in lots of air currents, so the weather shifts a lot—sunny and clear one day, thick fog the next. They get a lot of snow, too. The West coast has more freezing rain and sleet, but not as much total accumulation. The prairies get the really intense cold, and a ton of snow each year—that's most of Ontario and Quebec, and large parts of British Columbia and the Northwest Territories.

Below the Winterline, you've got milder temperatures on the West coast, heavy rain and fog on the East, alternating heat waves and flash





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floods near the Great Lakes, and dry heat or dry cold on the prairies. Most people keep to the cities, and especially to Southern Ontario and British Columbia, which have the mildest weather. Only diehards and crazies live above the Winterline—well, and the Indians, of course.

## Severe Weather

One thing I can tell you about Canadian weather—it can get downright nasty. Doesn't matter which part of the country or what time of year, there's always something to watch out for. During the summers, you've got tornadoes to worry about—they say Canada gets a couple hundred a year, mainly in the south around Manitoba and Ontario. Those things'll flip you up a thousand feet in the air, and toss you back half a county from where you started!

Then there's lightning storms, thunder storms, hail storms, wind storms, and of course floods. Plus you've got to watch for heat waves—I know, more than two-thirds of the country's stuck in winter, but down south in the summer it gets pretty blistering, and that can last for a few weeks at a time.

Winter's got its own joys, of course. The winds can cut right through you, coat an' all, and the ice storms can feel like you've been riddled with little bullets, only they chill your bones when they hit. But the worst is the blizzards. These things've got it all—freezing cold, biting winds, tons of snow and ice—and they last for a couple hours or more. I hear in the north you can get blizzards that last for days, or even weeks! The real danger, though, if you're caught in a blizzard, is whiteout—that's when the visibility's so bad from all the snow

that you can't tell the ground from the sky, because it's all the same glaring white.

I've heard tales of people who've walked right off cliffs or right into mountains, 'cause they couldn't see the damn things 'til they'd hit 'em. The best way to handle a whiteout is to stay indoors 'til it passes. If you've gotta go out, use a stick or somethin' to poke in front a' you, so's you don't slam into anything or find you're tryin' to walk on air.

## The Northern Lights

One sight that's well worth seeing is the Northern Lights, or Aurora Borealis. The best description I've heard of this spectacular display is "Nature's own fireworks." The shimmering waves of colored light appear in the sky a few times a year, most commonly March and September or October, and you can see them all throughout Canada, though Alaska and eastern Canada provide the best viewpoints.

Midnight's when they seem most active, though the display sometimes lasts a few hours. The way those lights dance about, you'd swear they're alive somehow, and it literally takes your breath away to watch them up there. Sometimes it looks like you could reach out and touch 'em, and I swear I saw the lights brush the top of a mountain once, but locals tell me that's just a trick of the eye, and they're way too high to touch.

They also say the sounds aren't real, but I heard 'em all the same—a swishing sound, like a heavy curtain, and sometimes a crackling sound like lightning or static electricity. Maybe I imagined the sounds somehow, but the Northern Lights are real, and the Canadians are mighty proud of 'em. I'd be too, if we had something like that down here.



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## A History of Canada

According to folks who study such things, the first humans came to North America thousands of years ago. Of course, the Indians say they've been in Canada as long as the land itself. Even if that's not technically true, it's close enough in my book. The first people in Canada came after the Ice Age, settling on the land left exposed after the ice melted. The Eskimos in the far north still live like those distant ancestors, nomadic hunters preying upon walrus and seal instead of mammoth and bison. Some of their relatives moved further south, though, and became the Indian tribes we know today.

The first Europeans arrived as early as 1000 AD. That was Leif Ericson, a Viking sailor who set up a colony in what he called "Vinland." That one's long gone, though. After him was John Cabot, who sailed from Bristol, England in 1497 and found the eastern shores of Canada. He also found an abundance of fish, which led to great fishing expeditions from the European countries, mainly near Newfoundland and Nova Scotia.

## The French Arrive

It all changed in 1524. That was the year a Florentine navigator named Giovanni da Verrazano sailed to Canada at the command of King Francis I of France. Verrazano's report was favorable, and ten years later Francis sent Jacques Cartier to do some exploring. Cartier covered most of the coast of the Gulf of St. Lawrence, then followed the St. Lawrence River all the way to its highest point—right where Montreal would some day stand. In fact, it was Cartier who named the mountain behind the island, Mount Real.

The French tried several times to get a colony going on Canada, but each time they failed miserably. The 1541 colony barely lasted a year. The colony on Sable Island in 1598, and the trading post at Tadoussac in 1600, both fell in less than three. Then, finally, in 1604, Pierre du Guast, sieur de Monts, established a colony at Port Royal. His geographer, Samuel de Champlain, named it the Habitation. Du Guast had incentive, of course—he'd been given the French monopoly on trading furs in Canada, a potential gold mine. In 1608 Champlain, acting under du Guast's authority, established France's first permanent Canadian colony at Quebec.

## The English Stick An Oar In

The French weren't the only ones interested in Canada, however. The English were still expanding, setting up colonies everywhere, and Canada seemed a prime choice. The two nations fought frequently—and their Canadian colonies usually bore the brunt of it. Quebec was even captured at one point, in 1629, when Champlain was forced to surrender his colony to an English Fleet. The French obtained a truce, however. Champlain was released, and New France was restored to the French—he was even made governor, in 1633. Then in 1642, a small mission post called Ville-Marie was founded, on the island before Mount Real. Years later, the colony was renamed Montreal.

## Restless Natives

The English were only part of the French's problem, of course. Some of the local Indian tribes were less than happy about these pale-skinned invaders. The Iroquois, in particular, hated the French, in part because the French had helped the Huron against them (starting back



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with Champlain himself, back at the Habitation). The Huron were wiped out in 1648, but the Iroquois continued their attacks against the French as late as 1692.

## Merchants Rule

In 1670 England got clever, and decided to use business instead of military force. That's when they founded the Hudson's Bay Company for fur-trading. The HBC, as it's often called, quickly made itself indispensable to Canadians by offering better and cheaper supplies than anyone else—every sale increased England's hold over the area.



The British serve the French their eviction notice.

## It's...da Bishop!

Even the Church wanted a piece of the action, and in 1674 a bishop was appointed in Canada. Of course, not all the inhabitants were Catholic, so that started a whole new series of conflicts.

In 1689 France and England actually went to war, and Canada was dragged into the fight, with battles between its French and English colonies. The fighting continued, on and off, until the end of the Seven Years' War over in Europe, which ran from 1756 to 1763. The British won. At least one person wasn't too happy about that—an Ottawa chieftain named Pontiac showed his displeasure by slaughtering the inhabitants of every British fort along the Great Lakes, except for Fort Detroit, which managed to hold out until reinforcements.



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Canada was still a mixed bag, though, with both French and British peoples, both Catholic and Protestant, and the English government knew it had to make some allowances. The Quebec Act of 1774 was a major step—it extended Quebec's boundaries as far as the Ohio River valley and recognized the Roman Catholic church's right to tithe in Canada. It also established British criminal law in the area, but allowed French civil law to handle conduct between Canadians. Less than a year later, the thirteen rebelling Atlantic colonies (our own forefathers) tried to claim Quebec as a "fourteenth colony," but the people resisted and the revolutionaries backed down. After the Revolution, a lot of British Loyalists (Tories, we called them) fled the new United States and settled in Nova Scotia, where they could still be loyal to the crown.

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Unfortunately, the Tories continued to make trouble—just like they did down here. They were complaining about the Quebec Act, and how they had to abide by French laws instead of British ones. Of course, the Quebecois weren't all that happy to have more neighbors, either. The British didn't want to risk another revolution, so they responded with the Constitutional Act of 1791, splitting Canada into two provinces, Upper and Lower. Upper Canada was mostly British, and Lower Canada mostly French, and each was allowed to follow its own traditions and civil laws.

## Continued Growth

Meanwhile, in 1783 a group of Montreal merchants founded the powerful North West Company. The North West Company explored the western regions of Canada. It also gave the HBC a run for its money, which most people were happy to see—the HBC had controlled trade for far too long, and in a lot of places it had more power than any officials.

And more people were coming over all the time. In 1812 The Earl of Selkirk bought a large parcel of land from the HBC, and established the Selkirk Settlement, which became the first permanent settlement on the Canadian prairie. It was comprised of displaced Scottish farmers who had fled the British Isles.

## The War of 1812

Of course, we remember that year for a different reason. The War of 1812 was, in my opinion, a waste of everyone's time and effort. Britain and France were fighting—as always—and Britain had been confiscating American shipments to France, and impressing American

sailors into its own Royal Navy. The U. S. wasn't too thrilled about that, so it attacked Canada. The end result? We burned their capitol, York, which was rebuilt as Toronto; they burned our capitol, Washington, D.C., which was rebuilt under the same name—then both sides went home. Only now the Canadians knew the Union might attack at any time, and for almost any reason. Small wonder they patrol their borders so carefully!

In 1821 the HBC and the North West Company merged, after several years of bloody competition. Now the HBC was indisputably the largest fur trader in Canada, and woe betide any would-be rivals!

Between 1815 and 1850 they say almost one million people migrated to Canada! Most of them were from Britain, of course. They settled in the Maritime Provinces and generally in Upper Canada, swelling its English-speaking population and throwing the French-speakers into the minority.

## Rabble-Rousers!

Things kept getting worse for the French-speakers, too, and for a lot of the workers in general. Canada's elite became more wealthy all the time, and the gap between rich and poor increased. People started to talk, then to complain, and then finally to act. 1837 saw two attempted rebellions. The first took place in Upper Canada, and was led by William Lyon Mackenzie, who wanted to establish Canada as an independent nation. The second was in Lower Canada, and was led by Louis Joseph Papineau (and, thus, was named the Papineau Rebellion). Neither was successful, and both instigators wound up fleeing to the United States.



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The rebellions did show that Canada had a problem, though, and the governor-general, John George Lambton, Lord Durham, knew something had to be done about it. His recommendation to Britain was that the French-speakers be assimilated into the British society. This led to the Act of Union, in 1840, which reorganized the country. There were still two provinces, Canada West and Canada East (the former Upper and Lower, respectively) but the official language for both was now English. The two provinces were given elected assemblies, however, which was their first real taste of self-government.

## Reorganization

In 1864, the Maritime colonies of New Brunswick, Nova Scotia, and Prince Edward Island decided to discuss the possibility of merging into a single colony. Interestingly enough, several members of the Canadian province's government were also discussing a stronger union of some sort, chief among them Conservative leader John A. Macdonald, Liberal leader George Brown, and Georges-Etienne Cartier from Canada East.

Part of the reason for this was concern about the United States—the Civil War was dragging on, but at some point that would have to end, and then the Union might turn once again towards invading and occupying Canada. There were also political reasons, with Canada East and Canada West more and more frequently deadlocked in parliament. And, third, there were strange and disquieting tales from the wilderness, of odd sightings and strange disappearances. It seemed the perfect time to reorganize the country, and form a tighter bond throughout.

When Macdonald and the others heard of the Maritimes' meeting, they asked to attend, and all of them met in Charlottetown, Prince Edward Island. There, the delegates from Canada proposed a North American colonial union, similar to the union of the United States, with a centralized federal government but with each province controlling its own local issues and concerns. The proposed Confederation would still retain ties to Great Britain and still answer to the crown, in the form of a governor-general, and Britain would control its foreign policy. This also meant the continued presence of British troops, something the Canadians were grateful for, given the war to their south.

It took three years to iron out all the details, but on July 1, 1867, the British North America Act took effect and the Dominion of Canada was born. It contained six provinces: Ontario (formerly Canada West), Quebec (formerly Canada West), New Brunswick, Nova Scotia, Prince Edward Island, and Newfoundland. Those last two almost didn't join. However, both colonies had been the site of increasing strangeness for the last few years, and that finally overcame their reservations about the confederation. The federal government, composed of a House of Commons (elected), a Senate (appointed for life), and a governor-general as the Crown's representative, was established at Ottawa. John Macdonald was appointed as prime minister.

The new Ice Age started during all this, of course, and that probably helped unite the provinces as well. Macdonald had already contacted Hellstromme on behalf of Canada West, and he pointed out that, if they did all band together,



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it would be easy enough to continue that new protective fence into the other provinces as well. Nobody wanted to get stuck out in the cold—literally—so they all agreed. Some say that's why Macdonald was made prime minister, because he controlled the Winterline project. If that's the case, I have to say—he's a pretty smart feller.

Macdonald did his best to hold the Dominion together and even expand its reach. By the Deed of Surrender of 1869, Canada purchased the vast Northwest Territories from the Hudson's Bay Company. The company was permitted to retain trading rights in the area and a small percentage of the prairie lands—the fact that most of that area was frozen solid probably helped lower the price.

## A Rocky Start

The only western settlement of importance east of the Rockies was the Red River colony (formerly the Selkirk Settlement) in Manitoba, which had grown to about 12,000 by that time. The metis (half-French, half-Indian) made up most of the colony's population. Their leader, Louis Riel, defied the new governor Macdonald sent out to take possession of the territory from the Hudson's Bay Company.

Riel seized Fort Garry, set up his own provisional government, and forwarded demands to Ottawa that the civil rights and the land rights of the people be protected. Riel also imprisoned some of the Ontario settlers who opposed him—rumors claimed he'd even had one of them, Thomas Scott, executed, but that proved to be untrue. Rather than add to the conflict, the Canadian government negotiated with Riel. The Manitoba Act of 1870 made Manitoba a Canadian province, with its seat at Fort Garry

and its religious practices and French schools recognized. Riel led his people in affirming the new arrangement, and freed his prisoners—he was unanimously elected the leader of the new Manitoba province. Funny thing about Manitoba—most of it's above Hellstromme's fence, but for some reason the Winterline runs around it anyhow. It's like the province has its own protection against the Ice Age—I guess they aren't willing to share, though.

In 1871, British Columbia became the eighth province of Canada, on the condition that the Dominion finance a transcontinental railroad and extend the Winterline along with it. That idea fired Macdonald's imagination, and he made it his main focus from that point on. 1873 saw Macdonald birth another creation, however, and one that's already become a mainstay of Canadian life—the North-West Mounted Police, or Mounties. These men and women bring law and security to the Northwest Territories, and believe me, that's a whole lot harder than it sounds.

Between the Mounties, the railroad, and the discovery of ghost rock (first found in Canada in 1870, out in British Columbia), the Dominion's spent the last five years transforming itself from a collection of small towns to a network of growing cities and booming industrial centers. They're a long way from done, of course, but a few places in Canada might surprise you—they could give Chicago a good run for its money. To be honest, I think that the Ice Age has helped Canadian development more than they know—it's made everyone gather in the handful of areas below the Winterline, which made it easier to build big cities and create new, modern industries.



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## CHAPTER TWO:

## HOME AND NATIVE LAND

### British North America

The Brits call all their possession on this continent "British North America." I know that sounds pompous, but they excel at that, don't they? Anyway, I think some Canadians take offense at the term, since they see themselves as more than mere colonials – which is fair enough. Canada's its own country now, even if Britain doesn't yet realize it. They're loyal to Queen Victoria and support the old country most of the time. But there's a growing sense of independence here. You can almost feel it in the air. If the Union weren't such a threat, I can't help but imagine that Canada might actually be a friend to Americans rather than a jealous rival. Maybe someday things will change for the better.

### Dominion of Canada

The official name of our neighbor to the north is the Dominion of Canada. Basically, the term "dominion" is just a fancy way of saying "self-governing part of the British Empire." Canada's got its own government and leader, but it still recognizes the Queen of Great Britain as its head of state. The country's more or less a democracy, like the Union, although the specifics differ a great deal. Actually, some might say that their structure works better, since all of their provinces are still part of the

Dominion while our states are divided between Union and Confederacy. Still, Canada's got tensions of its own.

### John A. Macdonald

Sir John A. Macdonald is the prime minister of Canada and the head of the Conservative Party. Macdonald is a pragmatic man. He knows that Canada is composed of lots of different competing groups, so accommodation is necessary. At the same time, he also believes that a strong central government, more powerful than the provinces, is needed to keep these different groups from tearing the country apart.

Macdonald helped bring both Manitoba and British Columbia into the Dominion and he oversaw the transfer of the Northwest Territories from HBC to government control. He's also a firm believer in the power of the railroad; he fully expects it to unite the country more than ever before. His Liberal opponents claim that Macdonald has taken public funds, particularly from large companies, for use on the railroads, but that wasn't proven. Besides, if that's what it takes to get the job done, I doubt he'd hesitate.

Ironically, Macdonald is much less hostile toward the Union than many Canadian politicians. He recognizes that Canada depends heavily on trade with the Union and that its future depends on maintaining good relations with



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the Americans. At the same time, he knows that Britain isn't too happy with the Union right now, so he's making his case quietly and with the backing of businessmen who share his views.

I managed to meet Macdonald, briefly, and he's not a bad fellow, although I thought it was a little early in the day to start drinking. I got the impression that he really is a patriot, and he's doing what he thinks is best for Canada. That doesn't mean he's right all the time, but he strikes me as an honorable enough man whom the Union shouldn't fear, as long as they also agree to play fair.

## Alexander Mackenzie

Mackenzie is the leader of the Liberal Party, which means he's currently the leader of Her Majesty's Loyal Opposition in Parliament. Like a lot of Canadians, he's originally from Scotland—in fact, he only came to North America in 1842. Originally, he worked as an editor for a newspaper advocating democratic reform in Canada, but then he became involved in politics himself, both on the provincial and federal levels. Because of his political leanings, he joined the Liberal Party and soon became their leader in Parliament.

In 1873, Mackenzie and his party spearheaded the Pacific Scandal in an attempt to bring down John A. Macdonald's administration. The plan failed, however, and Mackenzie has lost some support because of it.

I met Mackenzie too, and I have to say that he strikes me as a hard-working man of remarkable integrity but poor imagination. He fears the power of large corporations, which is why he favors building a transcontinental railroad on a self-financing basis, and he often points to the Union and Confederacy railroad barons as prime examples of what

could happen in Canada. The funny thing is, if Mackenzie had gotten his way the Canadian Railroad probably still wouldn't be finished.

## The Earl of Dufferin

Since Canada still acknowledges Queen Victoria as head of state, Her Majesty needs an official representative, the governor general, in the Dominion. That man is Frederick Temple Blackwood, First Earl of Dufferin and Ava. As a British lord, he's got a lot of diplomatic skill—and he's needed every bit of it while navigating Canadian politics. Among other crises, he helped the government weather the Red River Rebellion and the Pacific Scandal. Maybe we could use a governor general of our own.

Lord Dufferin is also unusual in that he actually seems to like Canada. He even claims to like the winters there, God help him. He has made one of his duties the preservation of Canada's historic sites. Before he even came to the dominion, he used his influence to preserve the wilderness on the tip of the Halifax peninsula in Nova Scotia. Now, he's done the same for the area around Quebec City. He even managed to preserve the old walls of that same city, despite the developers who wanted to destroy them. Mind you, the developers had a fair case, clearing unused structures to make room for useful new ones, but you have to keep some of your old monuments around.

Not that Lord Dufferin wields much actual power. In theory, everyone defers to him for advice and so forth. In practice, that's just a holdover from colonial days and has little consequence in modern politics. If the governor general decides to throw his weight behind something—like preserving the





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walls of Quebec—he may be able to muster public opinion in his favor, but that's not a guarantee. More often than not, he's just a figurehead. The real power rests with the Prime Minister and his Cabinet.

I did have a nice long chat with Lord Dufferin—he's not as busy as Macdonald or Mackenzie, so he was happy to take a little time and answer some questions. Nice fellow, actually—very polished, well-spoken, but he seemed genuinely friendly. Almost a shame he doesn't have more control over things, but I wonder if he'd be as nice after a few years in charge, with all that responsibility.

## The Canadian Military

Canada's military is an interesting thing. Originally, the British provided troops to protect their colonies. The Canadians preferred it that way—why join an army when you can have your absentee landlord send one over? But as Canada has become more independent—and especially since the Dominion—it's gotten more interested in the idea of its own native forces. Britain's been willing to pull some of its troops back home and let the Canadians fill out the bulk of the defenses. Which isn't to say the British aren't still in charge, but they're only too happy to let someone else take the bullet.

These days, the Canadian militia is organized into the traditional branches: Cavalry, Artillery, Engineers and Infantry. The infantry are the easiest to spot, since they've got scarlet tunics with blue facing, and white helmets. Rifle regiments (the Queen's Own Rifles) wear dark green jackets with scarlet facings. Of course, most Canadian soldiers have "workaday" uniforms as well, and those tend to be buckskin jackets and Stetsons instead of tunics and

helmets. Hell, buckskin's more durable, and that scarlet and dark green tends to eliminate any chance of sneaking up on the enemy.

## Elite Troops

The Governor General's Foot Guards are quite a sight—they're more like British troops than pretty much any other Canadian unit, in their gray overcoats and black bearskin headdresses. Steele's Scouts are an interesting unit, too—they're mostly trappers and traders, and what they lack in parade-ground discipline they more than make up in wilderness lore and individual toughness.

The 9th Voltigeurs de Quebec Infantry looks a little out of place with the others—they're all French-speakers, and they wear blue jackets and these funny knitted caps (I hear they're called "toques"—the caps, that is). But I wouldn't want to tell them that.

I've also heard rumors of an "A" Company, part of the 62nd St John Fusiliers, made up entirely of women! I did catch a glimpse of A Company at one point, but they were too far away to see much—I could make out the khaki shirts, but not how they were cut. I do know A Company's commander is a man, one Captain Edward Sturdee, so maybe it is just a rumor. Who ever heard of women in the military?

Canada doesn't have a navy of its own, of course—Britain may like its new Dominion, but that doesn't mean they trust it completely. They've got naval officers, but they all serve on British ships. Canada has two major naval bases—Halifax on the East Coast and Victoria on the West. Only the warships are British, though—all the patrol boats and supply vessels are supplied by the Canadian government.



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## The North-West Mounted Police

It's only been a few years since Prime Minister Macdonald created the North-West Mounted Police, or Mounties. They're a paramilitary police force, charged with maintaining order in the new territories and settlements of Canada. Macdonald was afraid Canada's frontiers would become as lawless as our own, and the Mounties were created to prevent that.

So far that plan seems to have worked, although there are plenty of reports that seem to indicate that things are changing.

## No Whoop

The Mounties started in 1873, and by 1874 they had almost 300 brave young men looking for adventure. They set out from Manitoba into the North-west Territories—people called it the great March West. From what I hear, the Mounties' first assignment was to eliminate Fort Whoop-up, the most notorious whiskey station in the Territories.

It took them three months on horseback to reach the fort. On the way up, their commissioner, Lieutenant Colonel George Arthur French, decided to split some of his men off to Fort Edmonton. Then Ottawa ordered him to make his headquarters at Swan River, near the Manitoba border, so he took two divisions back there, and left his assistant, Lieutenant-Colonel James Farquharson Macleod, to continue on towards Fort Whoop-up. By the time Macleod got there he only had about a hundred men.

Not that it mattered. Fort Whoop-up was deserted—the whiskey traders had run off when they'd heard the Mounties were coming!

## On Duty

Since then, the Mounties have fanned out over the Canadian west. They've set up a number of forts and other headquarters, just so they've got a presence in the area. They often act as judges as well as police, since there aren't any law courts out there yet. And they do their best to make sure everyone, French and English, Indian and European, gets along peaceably. I've heard tell that the Mounties maintain such high standards of integrity and fairness that they can walk into Indian camps without being stopped—the Tribes respect them that much.



The Mounties always get their man.

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From what I understand, the Mounties now number five hundred men. They break down into companies, ten of them at fifty each. Each company controls one of their forts and is run by a Sergeant Major. The Majors report back to Inspectors in Edmonton, who report directly to the Commissioner. These days that's Macleod—French retired last year. I've heard rumors that he saw things he just couldn't handle, but more likely he got tired of the constant pressure and simply wanted to move back east to be near his family.

Within each company are units of ten men. Each unit has a corporal and nine constables. The corporals are responsible for the men in their unit, and report back directly to their Sergeant Majors.

You can always spot a Mounty, because they all wear the same uniform—bright red coat, tan hat and pants, and black boots. They don't worry about sneaking up on people—that's not the Mounties' way.

According to the Mounties themselves, their motto is *Maintiens le Droit*, which is French for "Maintaining The Right." But the settlers and Indians have given them another one: "They Always Get Their Man"—everyone says they live up to both.

## Hudson's Bay Company

The Hudson's Bay Company (or HBC) is Canada's oldest business. It was founded in 1670 in London, England, by a group of British merchants who couldn't wait to get their hands on northern Canada's resources. Even today, the Company is very much a British enterprise. A committee of merchants in England manages it, and most of the employees come from Britain. In Canada, HBC's operations are in the hands of a

governor, who works with the chief trader of each individual post. The Company's headquarters in North America used to be York Factory on the west side of Hudson Bay, but in 1826 they moved to Lachine, just outside of Montreal.

Initially, the HBC made its money off the fur trade, since it held the monopoly. But no monopoly lasts forever. Small traders, especially Metis, kept moving in on the HBC despite the company's best efforts to enforce its monopoly. Most of them were too small to swat aside, but just large enough to sting. The HBC actually began losing money, which is why it agreed to sell the North-West Territories to the new Dominion government.

In return, HBC got a lot of money (I hear it was 300,000 pounds, though I can't swear to that), but they also got a lot of good land out West, and the property under and around each of their trading posts. That made them the single largest landowner in western Canada, which didn't hurt their influence any, I'm sure. Of course, most of that land is above the Winterline, but the HBC's clever—and wealthy. I wouldn't be surprised if they found a way to move that fence a bit further north, above their currently snow-covered property lines.

With more and more settlers coming out West, HBC has shifted its focus—it still deals in furs, of course, but its trading posts are turning into general stores as well. They do a lot of business with farm families, selling basic supplies. They also do a brisk trade in gadgets, too—somehow the HBC manages to get its hands on some of the latest devices, despite the fact that the Union refuses to sell to them.



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## Transcontinental Railroad

Canada was a latecomer to railroads (which they call "railways," like the British do). For a long time, Canadians were much more interested in developing canals and waterways, since they've got so many rivers and streams. Explorers finally realized, though, that the rivers didn't go everywhere, and that's when they admitted that railways were the path to the future.

Once they decided that, they didn't waste any time. The first Canadian railroad was the Champlain and Saint Lawrence Railway in 1836. Other railroads followed. Probably the most important was the Saint Lawrence and Atlantic Railroad, which was a joint venture between the Canadians and the Americans. This wasn't actually that uncommon, back then—the two nations traded quite a bit, and a workable railroad would help everyone. The problem was, railroads were expensive to build, so a lot of them wound up driving their investors bankrupt before being finished. The Saint Lawrence and Atlantic was the biggest joint venture that actually got completed. After that, most of the projects stopped, and Canada had to do without any new rails for a while.

After Confederation in 1867, railroads became a bigger priority in Canada. Macdonald played a large part in that—the new Prime Minister was convinced that a working railway system was the best way to bring the country together, and the Winterline provided a clear path for the tracks to follow across the continent. That's why the Intercolonial Railway, the first of the new generation, was built by the federal government itself, using British loans. They finished that one in 1874, and it's government-owned and operated.

When British Columbia joined the Dominion in 1871, its two conditions were that the Winterline be extended through their province (and shield at least half of the province itself) and that a transcontinental railroad be built within the next ten years. Macdonald agreed, of course, since both conditions matched his own goals, but the government didn't have the money to build that new railroad itself.

## The Pacific Scandal

Initially, British and American rail barons competed for the project. The British won, of course—the tensions between Canada and the Union didn't help American bids any. The Canada Pacific Railroad came up the winner, and started construction immediately. That led to the "Pacific Scandal"—the Liberal party claimed Macdonald had accepted money from Canada Pacific, as a bribe to award them the contract. The charges weren't proven, though, and apparently most people liked what Macdonald was doing, because he weathered the scandal and stayed in office. Canada Pacific put its best people, and all the latest technology, on the job and would you believe, they did it? The Transcontinental Railway opened just last year, running from coast to coast.

Down here, in both the Union and the Confederacy, the Rail Wars continue. I guess there is something to be said for government-run projects.

Part of the credit has to go to Sir Sanford Fleming. He's a Scotsman who came to Canada in 1845. Fleming was trained as a railroad surveyor and construction engineer, and Macdonald appointed him Minister of Railways in 1872. It's his job to handle all aspects of railway construction and operation,



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and he's doing an amazing job of it. I spoke with him, briefly—decent fellow, if a little obsessed with punctuality and scheduling. He showed up at exactly the time we'd agreed, to the second, and set his watch on the table while we talked so he wouldn't run over. He even told me about this notion he's had, to standardize time across the globe so everyone can coordinate more easily. It's pretty farfetched, actually—I doubt it'll ever catch on.

With the railroads running clear across Canada, cities are growing rapidly. Industry has moved into several locations, bringing new jobs and cheaper goods. It's no surprise that the towns with railway connections are becoming

larger and more important, as everyone else nearby flocks to them for access and commerce.

Towns at both ends of the line, out on the coasts, have turned into railroad service centers, where people work to repair damaged cars and build new ones. Since the government runs all the railroads, there isn't any competition between companies—the Ministry maintains its own cars and lines and employees, and makes more than enough money to turn a profit. As more people move to Canada, the demand increases. Makes me wonder if the same thing will happen to us, once we finally finish our own railroad system. Assuming it ever gets finished.



The local express chugs along the Winterline.

## Winterline

I mentioned the Winterline a little earlier. The actual line is a fence, about two feet high—I know, you'd think it'd need to be taller, but apparently that's enough. The whole fence is made of metal, and it crackles slightly, like a wood fire. At night you can even see a faint glow



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along the wires at the top. Don't ask me how this thing works, because I don't have a clue, but it clearly does. I actually saw a storm come rolling down one time, a massive thing with snow and sleet and hail and ice, and it stopped just shy of the Winterline, then started scuttling sideways like a frightened calf. Weirdest thing I've ever seen—a frightened storm.

For long stretches the Winterline runs right along the Transcontinental Railway, with barely two feet of space between the tracks and the fence. Actually, it's the railway that runs along the Winterline, since Hellstromme had started constructing the fence before the railway

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was done, and it made sense to put the tracks right near it. Each time the railway hits a major city, the Winterline balloons out and around, going all the way around the city's northern perimeter. It doesn't do this in small towns, which gets really strange—you can literally walk two blocks and go from a sunny afternoon to the middle of a blizzard. Needless to say, most people don't live on the north side of the Winterline.

On either coast, the Winterline and the railway deviate a bit. To the East, that's because the railway stopped at Quebec City, and Newfoundland insisted that the Winterline cover at least its coastline. In the West, it's because British Columbia insisted that the Winterline cover at least half its land, instead of cutting to the southwest corner, where Vancouver and Victoria are. So on both coasts, you can see the fence and the railway split apart—I wouldn't be surprised if they built new railway tracks along those stretches, since they already have the fence as a guide.

## Interference

The only place where the physical fence and the actual Winterline split is around Manitoba. The fence, and the railway, run right through the middle of the province. But the entire province has normal weather, so everyone says that the Winterline runs along the northern edge of Manitoba, and rejoins the actual fence on the province's far side. Somebody asked Hellstromme about that once, and he just harrumphed and muttered something about "interference"—I don't know if he meant something was interfering with the Winterline to make it extend over the province's northern section, or that someone had interfered and put up their own extension somehow.

## Tornado Alley

The Winterline has caused one new problem. Apparently twisters are formed when a hot-air mass and a cold-air mass collide—in other words, when a warm front and cold front butt heads, and the air swirls around between them. Well, the Winterline is a permanent cold-front, and just south of that is often a good deal warmer, so it's no wonder that tornadoes have been showing up there lately. Lots of them. So many that everyone now calls land on either side of the Winterline by a new name—Tornado Alley.

The real problem is that Tornado Alley runs along the outer edge of the major cities, covers the top half of most small towns along the railway, and completely envelops the railway itself for long stretches. Canada's used to tornadoes, but you can expect at least one twister to be in Tornado Alley at any given time, and most places along the path get hit at least once a month, if not more. If you take the train, you're almost guaranteed to get buffeted—the government wound up spending a lot more on train cars than they planned, and these things are huge and heavy and come with cast-iron shutters on the windows. Usually the train just gets battered a bit, and one or two of the cars might lift off the tracks for a few seconds before dropping back down. Usually.

## Rezoning

People've been petitioning Macdonald to either move the Winterline a bit higher or move the tracks a bit lower. Shifting the fence would be the easier of the two by far, but Hellstromme's contract gives him total control over any alterations and he's flat out refused—he claims that shifting the fence even a



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few inches from its present location would change everything, and could destroy its effectiveness. So the Canadians just have to deal with being hit by tornadoes any time they take the train, and anyone living in the Alley had better get a sturdy house with a good deep cellar.

## The Fenians

Most Canadians are still happy to be part of the British government. But not everyone. The most aggressive group of protesters by far is the Fenian Brotherhood, which is funny since they're a secret society. At least, their membership is secret. They're pretty open about their goals.

## Free Ireland

The Fenian Brotherhood wants to free Ireland from British rule. So why are they in Canada? Because they want to free Canada as well—apparently so they can use it as a staging area for independence-minded Irish immigrants to rally in heading back to take back their homeland. And yes, having a staging area on the wrong side of the ocean is a little foolish, but no one yet has accused the Brotherhood of strategic genius.

For the last twenty years, the Brotherhood has been starting fights and staging raids. In 1866, they raided a New Brunswick customs station. That same year they actually invaded Niagara (which led to the Battle of Ridgeway). The problem the government faces is that the Brotherhood has a lot of men with fighting experience, and not just in brawls. There were quite a few Irishmen in our own Civil War, and after leaving—either after being discharged or deserting—a lot of them moved up to

Canada and joined the Brotherhood. So they have no shortage of manpower. Fortunately, the Brotherhood seems to lack a clear leader, or one with a good head for strategy, so they're not really a major threat to the stability of the Dominion.

## Doh!

Actually, the Brotherhood is sometimes its own worst enemy, in a way. New Brunswick had been uncertain about joining the Dominion—until after the Fenian raid. That attack convinced them that being part of a larger nation was a worthwhile endeavor, and New Brunswick agreed to join. The Brotherhood probably smacked itself for that one.

## Diehards

Unfortunately, they're not giving up—leave it to the Irish to be stubborn (I know I am). The last few years have seen more skirmishes, particularly along Canada's border with the Union. The British have even claimed that the United States support the Brotherhood, using it as a guerrilla force, but I think that's just another excuse to dislike the Union. After all, if the Brotherhood did ever succeed the Union would have an even more volatile neighbor to the north, and nobody wants that.

The problem is, I heard a few other things while I was up there, things I didn't much like. Stories about Fenians who don't act quite normal—even for Irish. I don't know what it all means, exactly, but it bothers me. I think there's a lot more going on with this group than anyone realizes, and I'd hate to see them give the rest of us a bad name.



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## Indian Nations

Canada has a lot of different Indian tribes, just like we do here. That's not too surprising, seeing as how the Indians supposedly came down from Canada originally. The easiest way to talk about them is to break them down by region, into Arctic, Eastern, Plains, and West Coast.

### Arctic Indians

Arctic or Inuit Indians used to only live up north, in the frozen regions of Canada and Alaska. Ever since the Ice Age, they've had the run of the Dominion, though—they cover more ground than all the other Indians put together. Don't ask me how they do it, either—snow stays year-round all through that area, and it's bitterly cold even on warm days. Yet the Inuits survive, and even prosper—in their own fashion.

Inuits have their own tribal groups, though these are small—between five hundred and a thousand members. The group all speaks the same dialect, and marriages stay within it. Inside the group are regional bands, usually two to five families (a married couple, their children, and any elderly, infirm, or unmarried relatives).

All the bands in the tribal group gather together during the winter, at the sealing camps. The rest of the time, the bands live by themselves—the families within it are usually related, and live near each other. I found a small band that was as interested in me as I was in them—I lived with them for a few weeks, and we traded stories. Nice people, actually, once you get to know them—they're just not used to strangers much.

### Hunters

The Inuit lifestyle is built around hunting sea-mammals, particularly seals, the same way the Plains Indians center on bison. During summer and fall, though, the Inuit hunt caribou or fish along the coast, or hunt polar bears and whales (and if you ever saw a polar bear, you'd be amazed that anyone would dare hunt it, even in a group!). Seal-hunting takes place in winter, and tends to involve the entire tribal group.

Most Inuit belongings are built from local materials, particularly bone, horn, antler, ivory, stone and animal skins. In some areas grass or baleen is used for basketry, wood substituted for bone, native copper for antler or bone, and bird or fish skins for animal skins. They even use animal sinew and intestines for things!

The Inuit travel by sled or by boat. The sleds are pulled by dogs. The dogs also help locate seals under the ice, and hold bears at bay until the hunters arrive. They use two kinds of boats—a small, single-person hunting boat called a kayak, and a larger boat called an umiak, which is for transport or whale-hunting. The Inuits I met let me travel in a sled, and an umiak, but I drew the line at kayaking—I'm not getting in a one-man boat made to flip upside down!

### Keepin' Warm

While traveling, the Inuit live in skin tents, conical like Plains wigwams and made from de-haired caribou or sealskin. But most of the time, they live in domed snow houses (called an "igluvigak," or Igloo). These are amazing feats of engineering—they're actually made of blocks of ice! You enter through a small passageway, and inside there's a large main chamber, with a sleeping platform, and storage chambers off to the side.





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They usually line the wall with caribou skins for extra insulation. Some of these things even have windows, made of clear lake ice set into the roof! I hear that homes in the western Arctic are sometimes made of wood instead, gathered from driftwood found along the shore. I doubt those homes are as snug and warm as the igloos, though—I was impressed.

For most Inuit groups, footwear is made from the skin of two different species of seal, either haired (for winter use) or hairless (for spring and summer use); that second kind are completely waterproof. In some areas caribou skin is used instead of sealskin, especially for

winter boots. I still have my pair—they're great, once you get used to the smell.

The Inuits also have amazing winter coats, called parkas. These usually have an inner and an outer jacket, with the outer generally made from caribou fur. Sometimes they have a sealskin parka for the warmer months, and save the caribou for winter. I was given one of these garments, by the family I befriended—it's the warmest thing I've ever worn!

The Inuit don't care much for jewelry or adornment, although the women do have facial tattoos. But names are very important to them, and they say that an infant's name helps form the child's identity and character, even before birth.

The Inuit are also surprisingly musical. Their particular love is the drum, which they make by stretching a skin membrane across a wooden hoop. During tribal gatherings, there are often drum circles, with dancers in the center, but the rest of the year the drummers perform individually, standing and chanting to their own beat.

The family I stayed with was very hospitable—I gathered that generosity is considered one of the greatest of traits. I think they're also fascinated by outsiders, since they see other people so rarely, especially non-Inuits. Right now, they're also really puzzled. These families have lived in the same areas for centuries, and suddenly over the last ten years their boundaries have increased dramatically, as the Ice Age has covered more of the country. A lot of the tribes are sticking to their ancestral lands, but the more aggressive ones are beginning to expand, moving further south into areas they've never seen before. Of course, the further they go the more likely they'll run into trappers and hunters coming up from the cities and towns, and I'm not sure I want to see those encounters. But at least the Inuit have the advantage—they're used to the cold, and know how to live in it.



In many Indian legends, lake serpents are considered real.

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## Eastern Indians

The Indians in the eastern part of Canada are suffering. Traditionally, they made their living through farming, primarily corn, beans, and squash (the Micmac grew tobacco). The Iroquois, in particular, had elaborate farmlands. But most of those lands were above the Winterline, and now they can't grow anything there. So these tribes are forced to fall back on their "winter" activities, mainly fishing and hunting and gathering food along the coast.

Some eastern Indians live in wooden long-houses now, for warmth and security, but on hunting or fishing trips they live in conical wigwams, covered with birch bark or skins. Each wigwam houses a single family, although some tribes erect larger ones.

Clothing varies from group to group, but in general women wear long tunics over leggings and the men wear short tunics over breechcloths and leggings. All of them wear moccasins and have fur robes for winter.

Eastern Indians live in villages along the coast for part of the year, typically the summer. The size of the village varies from group to group. Each village elects a chief, but a council of adult males makes most decisions. Most groups choose a war chief to lead them into battle. And lately there have been a lot more battles, as these tribes have been forced to defend their homes from settlers interested in that same narrow band of land between the Winterline and the ocean.

All the eastern Indians I've met believe in supernatural powers. They say that all animals have spirits, so they have to be treated with respect—otherwise the spirits might get angry, and make it harder for you to catch their kin in future. Indians in the northeast also place great importance on the "vision quest." This

ritual is done alone, and the questor goes off and fasts and meditates until a guardian spirit appears in a dream. The guardian can be any type of native animal, and brings power and protection—different spirits have different strengths. If you've been favored by a particularly powerful guardian, you could even go on to become a shaman. From what I've heard, the eastern Indians think they've angered some powerful spirit, and that's what's caused the shift in weather.

Since most Eastern Indians are on the move for large portions of the year, they don't have many belongings. Instead of paintings and portraits, they decorate their clothing and moccasins, using dyes made from vegetables and berries, and sometimes affixing seeds or quills as well. Some tribes paint their bodies as well, though only for special occasions: black for funerals, red for war, and several colors with different designs for weddings and other celebrations. Indian tribes tend to be very musical, and every major event requires at least one dance, usually accompanied by singing and by instruments such as rattles, drums, and flutes. Everyone says Indians love games of chance; among the Eastern tribes that seems to be true—they have a lot of games using dice or straws. There's also a popular game called baggattaway, which looks a lot like the French "lacrosse."

One of the Eastern Indian tribes, the Micmac, has begun acting strangely over the last decade or so. Members of the tribe have broken off most contact with settlers. When they do meet, the Indians say very little, don't make eye contact, and leave quickly. It's almost like they're embarrassed about something. If the other tribes are right, maybe the Micmac had something to do with the new Ice Age?



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## Plains Indians

At first glance the Indians of the Canadian plains should be familiar to most of our readers, since they're very similar to those in the American West. These Indians live primarily by hunting buffalo. Some use animal skin disguises to get close enough to their prey to use bows and arrows. Others drive the buffalo off cliffs in what is called "buffalo jumps." While the men hunt, women spend their time processing and preserving the meat from the hunt. Some meat is cooked and eaten immediately, but most is sliced and sun-dried for the winter. The skin, bones, and horns of the buffalo get used for a wide variety of items, so that very little is wasted.

What I've discovered, however, is that the Plains Indians have more variety than I'd realized. First off, they have three major language groups: Algonkian, Athapaskan and Siouan. The Algonkian speakers—the Blackfoot, Cree, and Ojibway—comprise the largest population. The Siouan speakers are represented by the Dakota Sioux of Manitoba and Saskatchewan, the Assiniboine of Saskatchewan, and the Stoneys of Alberta. The Sarcee Indians of southern Alberta, who reportedly split from the northern Beaver tribe, represent the Athapaskan linguistic family.

The Assiniboine are easily the most familiar to us, as they are merely another branch of the Sioux. Their name is an Indian word describing their cooking practice, which involves boiling water by dropping heated rocks into it.

The Rocky Mountain Stoneys are also a branch of the Sioux-Assiniboine tribes. They live along the foothills from Chief Mountain in Montana to the Athabasca River. The Stoneys were invaluable

guides to early explorers like Capt. John Palliser and James Hector (1858-60), and they helped the Canada Pacific surveyors as well. In the 1840s, a man named Robert Rundle converted the entire tribe to Methodism, which is a pretty amazing feat! Then, just a few years ago, in 1873, George and John McDougall established the Morleyville Methodist Mission, and the Stoneys moved to settle alongside it. Some of the other tribes make fun of the Stoneys for being converted, and they're seen almost as half-breeds now, but the Stoneys don't let that bother them. All in all, they were some of the friendliest Indians I've ever met.

The Plains Cree are the dominant tribe on the Plains, in part because they cover more ground than anyone else. Like the Sioux, the Plains Cree were originally a woodland group who adopted the horse-bison culture. When the Europeans arrived, they learned that the Cree controlled two vital resources: furs and fresh meat. Before long, the Cree were equal partners in the fur trade business—many of them took up residence near the trading posts, and they adopted European goods, clothing, and tools but without losing their traditions or social structure. The Cree also forged alliances with the other tribes, especially the Ojibway and the Assiniboine, and that let them expand even more rapidly into new areas. Some people call the Cree "post Indians," meaning that they're dependent on the HBC's trading posts to survive. The Cree have been careful, though—even though they're happy to trade with the HBC, they still hunt bison for themselves, which keeps them self-sufficient.

The Cree's only real rivals are the Blackfoot Confederacy, which centers around the Red Deer, Bow and Old Man river systems of Alberta. The Blackfoot tribes—the Blackfeet (Siksika), Blood

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(Kainai), and Peigan (Pekuni)—are the most militant of the Plains Indians, and even the Cree are wary of them in battle. Each tribe has its own chief and society, but they all come together for some religious ceremonies, and to hunt or stage raids. The Blackfoot have been suffering more than the Cree, lately, because more of their land is over the Winterline—they've had to retreat south a bit, whereas the Cree are mainly below the Winterline and still have most of their lands intact.

Plains Indians also believe in the spiritual power of animals, but unlike the Eastern tribes they claim you can acquire that power for yourself if you perform the right rituals. I don't know what those rituals are, naturally, but I've heard that they're similar to vision quests, up to a point. I didn't ask too many questions—whether the tribesmen really do take on animal powers or just think they do, I don't think I want to upset them.

Funny thing, though—I was out at a trading post at one point and I saw a handful of Indians talking. From where I stood, they looked just like Sioux to me, right down to the designs on their clothes. They split apart after a few minutes, and I wandered over to an Indian who'd been giving me directions and stories earlier. "Those were Blackfoot," he said when I asked. "I didn't think they'd look so much like Sioux," I admitted, and he actually spit on the ground by my foot. "Pha! Not Sioux! Blackfoot!" That was all he'd say. But a few minutes later I saw two of those same Indians come out of the store and climb onto their horses, and if those weren't Sioux I'm not a reporter. I don't know what to make of it, though—the Sioux aren't even in that region!



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## West Coast Indians

For Indians on the West Coast, fishing, hunting, and gathering are important, in that order. Villages are built along the coast, parallel to the water itself—these used to run all the way up the coast, right into Alaska, but now they're concentrated below the Winterline. The tribes have several fishing methods, each one adapted to the local conditions and species: netting, trapping, harpooning, and trolling. All manner of sea-creatures are hunted, not just fish—waterfowl are caught with nets, and sea mammals hunted with harpoons (when at sea) or clubs (when ashore). For hunting, the tribes use bow and arrow but also snares, deadfalls, and more nets.

Gathering expeditions collect shellfish, berries, edible roots, bulbs, and greens. When the weather turns cold, the tribes generally move to their villages—most tribes have owned their lands for centuries, and their winter villages are well above the Winterline. But if it's winter down below as well, it doesn't really matter much—it just means a longer trek when summer comes again. As the weather down south turns warm, the tribes leave their villages and head back down to their chosen areas to hunt and gather. Food is preserved whenever possible, to help get through the leaner winter.

Most of the Western Indians are organized around kinship groups, each one from a common ancestor—usually traced through the women, since it's easier to prove ancestry that way. The whole group lives in a large house or a cluster of houses, and a member of the extended family acts as manager, handling all of the family's property and overseeing all celebrations, rituals, and meetings. Property ownership is extremely important—a kinship group

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has not only its houses but also hunting territory, seal rookeries, and fish-trap sites, and jealously protects them from outside use.

Since the Ice Age started, the group has taken to leaving a small band of warriors on its southern properties, to defend them against invaders while the rest of the group is in the village. Young men are usually assigned this task, making it a form of manhood ritual. Villages tend to hold larger kinship groups, and even though they're all related fights still occur between houses, usually over trespassing. Most of these villages don't have any formal government—each house rules itself, and the strongest family manager is usually followed by others.

The men handle the hunting and fishing, of course, while the women take care of the gathering, cooking, and food preservation, but everyone makes tools. Twine is used for fishnets and fishing lines, and woven into cedar-bark storage containers, collecting baskets, and hats. Winter dwellings are usually enormous houses with beamed ceilings and cedar planks, with rushes and cedar-bark mats for warmth. Most of the people wear fur cloaks against the cold, so these villages sometimes look like they're inhabited by short, lumpy bears and tall, paunchy wolves.

One interesting feature of the Western tribes is that they use slaves. Some are prisoners of war, but others are bought outright, and they all do menial chores and have few rights. Sound familiar at all?

Sometimes people marry outside their own kin group, usually to form an alliance with another village. Occasionally, a large assembly is called, with people from several kin groups. These assemblies provide opportunities for trading and feasting, but also for

examining kinship claims or witnessing cross-village marriages. Winter is preferred for serious religious rights, while summer is for games, feasts, and naming activities. The Western Indians also believe in the power of animal spirits, and often hold prayers or ceremonies to honor them. They believe in life after death, too, and have a variety of rituals to placate ghosts so they don't harm the living.

## The Arts

Music is important, of course, primarily singing, though whistles, horns, and drums are also used. There are songs for almost every occasion, and they seem to be the primary means of transmitting history.

The Western tribes also sculpt and paint. Their most impressive works are the totem poles that stand before villages and sometimes before individual houses. These carved and painted poles are used to show ownership, family identity, and lineage, and occasionally to tell stories. Of course, most of these poles are partially buried in snow and ice now, so I guess you can only read the top half of their stories, but the family probably knows the story by heart anyway.

## The Metis

Everyone has heard stories of half-breeds, people who are part-Indian and part-European. But in Canada it's more than just a story, and more than a handful of individuals. Up there, they're referred to as the Metis—the word is French, and means “mixed.” The Ojibwa Indians call them “wissakodewinmi,” meaning “half-burnt woodsmen”, because the Metis have lighter complexions than full-blooded



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Indians, and some of the French have copied that idea, calling the Metis "Bois Brule," or "burnt-wood." The Cree, on the other hand, call them "o-tee-paym-soo-wuk," which means "their own boss" or "people who own themselves." And then there is the name the Metis gave themselves: "The Forgotten People."

Originally the Metis were half-Indian and half-French or British, born of traders and native women. But over time the term has expanded to mean anyone with mixed Indian and European background, and they've formed their own culture, which is a mix of French, English, and Native elements. They even have their own language, Michif. The Metis used to work closely with the North West Company and the HBC, organizing commercial buffalo hunts for them and often handling relations between the European and Indian communities.

Some people don't like the Metis much. It's the same everywhere for people of mixed ancestry; "purebloods" on both sides thinking they're tainted and flawed. But the Metis don't seem to care that much. The ones I met had a lot of self-confidence and an impressive ability to move between the worlds of both parents. In many ways, they're the only true native Canadians, because their culture was born here and doesn't exist anywhere else.

## Louis Riel

When talking about the Metis, it's impossible not to mention Louis Riel, the "Father of Manitoba." Riel was born at Red River in 1844 and well-educated—he actually studied for the priesthood at the College de Montreal, then studied law after that. Rumors say he may have worked in Chicago and even St. Paul, Minnesota, but in the mid-1860s he was back in Canada.

In 1869, the federal government bought the North-West Territories from HBC, and appointed William McDougall as lieutenant-governor. MacDougall sent a survey team to Red River, the largest settlement in the territory. But Red River was the center of Metis culture, and the Metis were worried about what would happen when they became part of the Dominion, particularly since the area had recently received a lot of Anglo-Protestant immigrants. So the Metis formed a National Committee, with Riel as secretary. The committee blocked the survey and stopped McDougall from entering Red River. Then they seized Fort Garry—the HBC didn't even try to resist—and invited delegates from all sides to discuss a List of Rights Riel had prepared. A small group organized an armed resistance, but the Metis overpowered them, and Riel imprisoned the troublemakers at Fort Garry. He then issued a "Declaration of the People of Rupert's Land and the Northwest," and on December 23 he became head of the provisional government of Red River.

Fortunately, Prime Minister Macdonald wasn't interested in a lot of pointless bloodshed. He sent several delegates to Red River: Abbe J.B. Thibault, Col. Charles de Salaberry and Donald A. Smith, chief representative of the HBC in Canada. Smith persuaded Riel to summon a general meeting, which led to a convention of forty representatives from the settlement, both English and French. The convention met on January 26, and endorsed the List of Rights. At the same time, the Canadian prisoners were released and delegates were sent to Ottawa to negotiate Red River's entry in the Dominion.

Unfortunately, some of those same Canadians gathered together, armed, and the Metis were forced to imprison them again. Canadian militia officer Charles



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Boulton was court-martialed, though his death sentence was remitted. But fellow agitator Thomas Scott was also tried and sentenced to death. His sentence was set to be carried out on March 4.

## Amnesty

Meanwhile, Bishop Tach of St-Boniface (where, coincidentally, Riel had studied for the priesthood) arrived in Red River with a federal proclamation of amnesty. The prisoners were released again, and the delegates sent to Ottawa. MacDonald saw the advantage to having two new provinces instead of one, and agreed to Riel's terms. The Manitoba Act created the new province, granted the Metis almost one-and-a-half-million acres of land, and guaranteed bilingual rights for the new province. A new lieutenant-governor, A. G. Archibald, was dispatched to Manitoba, along with a military force to ensure a peaceful transition. Upon arriving, Archibald and Col. Garnet Wolseley were told of Scott's execution, but when the man turned up alive and unharmed all charges against Riel were dropped. The Metis then petitioned Ottawa again, and Macdonald agreed to recognize their hero—Archibald surrendered the title of lieutenant-governor to Riel, who became known as the “father of Manitoba.” Riel is still the province's leader to this very day.

I got to speak with Riel, very briefly. Interesting fellow, and not what you'd expect. Tall, slim, good-looking, and very quiet, my first thought was that he really should be a priest. He's smart, though, and well-spoken when he decides to speak, and the minute he opens his mouth everyone around stops to listen. The man is a natural leader—I had to suppress an urge to settle in Manitoba myself!



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## Other Folks

There are a couple of other groups in Canada you might want to know about. Each of them has some pull in the area, and given the way things are going these days, if you're up in the Dominion you can probably use all the friends you can get.

## The Catholic Church

The French who came across to Canada were Catholic to a man, and most of them still are. In fact, they say that Jacques Cartier celebrated Mass in Canada as far back as 1534, on the first of his three expeditions. Samuel de Champlain was also a devout Catholic, and he helped found a series of missions in the early seventeenth century. The Jesuits came over in 1625 to help, and started converting the Indians, but four years later the missionaries all fled back to France to escape the English. When France regained New France in 1632, the Jesuits were among the first to return—gotta admire their dedication, at least. Too bad it didn't help. Most of the tribes weren't interested in the white man's religion, especially the Huron and the Iroquois, and a lot of missions fell to the two tribes. It wasn't really until 1668, when the first Canadian seminary opened, that clergy could even be trained on the continent.

Even if the Catholic Church didn't get far with the Indians, it had full control over the French colonists. The Church handled education, health, and social services in all the French settlements, and the governors handled the rest. Things actually worked this way until 1760, when Britain conquered Canada once and for all.



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Naturally, the British took control of most daily activities. They weren't stupid, however, and quickly realized that the Church could help them placate and assimilate the remaining French inhabitants. For its part, the Church urged its followers to obey the British, which certainly didn't hurt their position under the new rulers.

## Strongholds of Faith

Since then, the Church's power has fallen off a bit in most of the Dominion, primarily because its priests are severely overworked. I hear there are about 2000 Catholic priests in the entire Dominion, which is ridiculously low given the size of this country. But in two places the Church is still strong—Quebec and Manitoba. The Quebecois are mainly French, and heavily Catholic, and the Metis are devout as well. I've heard grumblings of a possible religious war, but I think as long as everyone gets along okay and the provinces don't secede they should be fine. At least I hope so—one Civil War on this continent is enough!

## The Church of England

The Anglican Church (which is what the Church of England calls itself) has been in Canada a long time. The first Anglicans probably came over in 1497, with John Cabot's expedition. Martin Forbrisher's group had an Anglican as well, and he even performed services over in Canada in 1578. But it wasn't until 1710 that an actual chaplain came over, to service the military garrison at Annapolis Royal. In 1701 a man named Thomas Bray formed the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel, which basically worked as a mission society for the Anglicans, sponsoring their

clergy in Canada and funding churches. Then at the end of the last century the Church Missionary Society started up—initially it sent clergy to the West Indies, but then it shifted to Red River as another site of natives desperately in need of salvation. I don't think it took. Some of the Cree did go along, though—one of them, Henry Budd, even became a priest!

## Separation of Church & State?

The Anglicans do have a slight edge over the Catholics, in that their religion is so tightly bound to British rule. The Church of England was even established as the official religious body of the Maritimes, back in the 1760s. Of course, there was a downside to that—the colony leaders seemed to think that they should control how the Church did things, and the British Crown backed them up. So in return for public funding, the Anglicans had to let governors and politicians tell them what to do.

That was actually how things were up until about twenty years ago, when the crown finally agreed to grant the Anglicans in Canada their own legislative bodies, called synods. Then things got really strange, because in 1861 Britain decided that it had no authority over churches and synods in self-governing colonies—and that included Canada. So for the last fifteen years the Anglicans have been trying to figure out their own forms of government and structure. That also means trying to get as much as they possibly can, both from their own people and from the Dominion at large.

Right now there's what's called "church parties." These are groups of Anglicans who feel the same way about how the Church should be run. The two leading parties are the "evangelical party,"





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which wants a simple style of worship and sees the Church as a fellowship, and the "church party," which sees the Church as a divine society and wants elaborate services that reinforce the authority and grandeur of the clergy. I hear the two sides even come to blows at times, which seems pretty funny for a bunch of churchgoers. But I'm not going to be the one to tell 'em that!

## Actin' Neighborly

Canada's a mighty big piece of real estate, so it's no surprise that it plays an important role in North American politics at the moment. Neither the Union nor the Confederacy can afford to ignore Canada, as much as many Canadians might wish they'd do just that. Here's how the situation stands at the moment.

## The Union

As I said earlier, Canadian opinion is hostile toward Americans in general and the Union in particular. It's kind of surprising, I know. We Americans like to think we're universally well regarded, but, sadly, that's not the case. The Canadians are influenced by British policy regarding the recent unpleasantness, which has a lot to do with their attitude.

The Brits think the Union will attack Canada to make up for the resources and manpower it lost after the secession of the southern states—even if you only consider the land below the Winterline, that's a lot of real estate, and a lot of resources. The rumblings coming from Washington haven't exactly eliminated this worry. President Grant has said a fair number of intemperate things about the British and their "proper

place" in North America. It's no wonder there's a lot of tension along the two countries' common border.

Of course, the British haven't helped matters. They regularly allow Confederate ships to dock in Canadian ports, such as Halifax, which only inflames tensions further. Rebel spies can be found in many large Canadian cities. In fact, Confederate agents based out of Montreal undertook the raid on St. Alban's, Vermont in 1864. When the Union pursued these agents, they crossed over into Canadian soil, which didn't do much for good relations between the two countries. Since then, it's been more of the same, culminating in the British invasion of Detroit this year.

## The Confederacy

Of course, the Canadians don't like the Confederates much better. The only reason they even tolerate the rebels is because Britain sees them as a good way to keep the Union occupied. Even so, a lot of Canadians take pride in their forward thinking—they abolished slavery years before anyone else seriously considered it. Canada was also the final destination for parts of the Underground Railroad, and a lot of people in Ontario don't look too kindly on the place their ancestors fled. Sure, Jeff Davis finally freed the slaves, but only because it was politic and economical, neither of which impress the Canadians much.

Plus, a lot of Canadians worry that Britain's support for the Confederacy will eventually drag them into the Civil War. Nobody up there wants that, so support for the Confederacy is lukewarm at best, especially in the cities. Not that I blame them—why get involved in a war in somebody else's country if you don't have to?

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## CHAPTER THREE: FROM FAR AND WIDE

### The Border Region

Now, technically, the border between the Union and Canada runs from coast to coast. But no country could defend that entire stretch effectively. Besides, the western border doesn't get crossed very often—most people who try it never come back, and folks have learned to be wary. I've always said that area was dangerous—maybe now people will listen. So when we talk about the Border Region we're really only talking about the eastern half, around the Great Lakes. That stretch is heavily defended on both sides. The Canadians still worry that we'll try to claim them as another state, and the Union claims the British could launch more attacks from there—the battle over Detroit prevents anyone from claiming that's just paranoia talking. It's sad, really, that two countries so close physically should be so concerned about each other. But I suppose the Union and the Confederacy are the same way.

### The Great Lakes

If you've never been up to check out these beauties, you're missing out. There are five Great Lakes, all freshwater and all connected via channels: Lake Superior, Lake Michigan, Lake Huron, Lake Erie, and Lake Ontario. Lake Michigan is completely within the Union, but the other four all border on both nations, especially since they empty

onto the St. Lawrence River, Canada's most important waterway. On the Canadian side the lakes only touch one province, Ontario, but on the Union side they hit New York, Pennsylvania, Ohio, Indiana, Michigan, Illinois, Minnesota, and Wisconsin.

The Great Lakes really are something, and not just for their looks. I hear they hold over twenty percent of all the fresh water in North America! Plus some of the largest cities on the continent—Chicago, Detroit, Toronto, and Cleveland—lie on the shores of one lake or another.

I wish I could say the area is peaceful. British warships patrol the lakes, and so do Union ones—both sides claim the other started it and they're just responding. Either way, it's the merchants who get harassed, especially if they're caught on the wrong side. There's been talk about forming a merchant militia—a fleet of escort boats funded by merchants from both sides just to protect trade—but I doubt it'll happen. If it does, we could wind up with a three-way battle on those pristine waters. I don't think that sort of thing has any winners.

### Niagara Falls

People who've visited the area often argue over which side of the Falls is the more appealing. From where I sit, both have their merits. Sure, the Canadian Falls—also called the Horseshoe—is slightly taller than the American Falls



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and carries a lot more water over its edge. But the American Falls have more breadth to them, and sunset glitters more brilliantly when reflected in their waves. Whichever side you prefer, there's no question Niagara Falls is one of the more beautiful sights in North America. If it weren't for this damned tension between the Union and Britain, I expect the Falls would become an even bigger tourist attraction than they already are. Unfortunately, the sight of armed troops patrolling both sides of the border doesn't add a lot to the ambiance. Still, that hasn't prevented a few enterprising steamboat captains from offering tours around the bottom of the falls. Every once in a while shots are exchanged between the boats by hotheaded passengers.

There's a sad story about Niagara, sort of a warning of what could happen again. A while back, a town named White Pigeon sat on the Canadian side, not far from where Niagara Falls is today. Well, when war broke out in 1812, American troops overran the place and

destroyed it. They say the villagers hid their valuables by burying them in the ground, and you can still see little mounds all through that area. But the town itself is long gone—a peaceful little place crushed in a war it probably hadn't heard of. I'd hate to see this beautiful area stained like that again.

## Thousand Islands

People claim there are more than a thousand, actually, but somebody stuck the name the Thousand Islands on this collection of rocky, wooded islands in the St. Lawrence River, and the name stuck. They're between Brockville and Kingston, and they range from a few feet to a few miles in size. Most of them don't even have their own names. But they're all pretty, and they have a lot of wildlife, mostly waterfowl and fish. Not too surprising, then, that the Thousand Islands used to get a lot of fishermen. Lots of tourists, too—in fact, big hotels used to line the shores, and a few were even built on the larger islands. Most of



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those are long since ruined, of course, though people claim they can see lights and hear voices on clear nights.

And those voices may be real. Thing about the Thousand Islands is, because they're so close together they're an easy way to cross the border—a smuggler or spy can hide out on one of the islands until nightfall, creep along a little ways, and then hide again the next night. The Iroquois used to do this all the time, back when the Thousand Islands were their campgrounds. So have soldiers, during various battles in the area. I've heard you can still hire an Indian guide to get you through the Islands safely and undetected. Just avoid the hotels—you never know what's still living there.

## Manitoulin Islands

On Lake Huron, there's an archipelago of three large islands and several smaller ones, known as the Manitoulin Islands. The island of Manitoulin itself is over eighty miles long and has an extremely rugged coast, while islands like Drummond and Cockburn are forested as well as rocky. Drummond Island is owned by Michigan and the rest are part of Canada. All of the islands are home to Indians, who survive by fishing the rich waters of the lake. In recent years, though, the British have taken to setting up forward bases in the area—at least that's what I hear. I can't say for certain, because most non-Indians avoid the islands if possible. Back in '75, an American fishing boat disappeared near Manitoulin and was never heard from again. John J. Bagley, who was governor of Michigan at the time, made an issue out of the disappearance, but it didn't come to anything. Most people think the British had something to do with it, but of course there isn't any proof.



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## Detroit

I won't say too much about Detroit here. For one, it's not part of Canada at all. Sure, the British have occupied it, but neither they nor the Union have said anything about it changing hands, and Canada hasn't made any attempt to annex it. I think the British did it just to teach us a lesson, really. Not that this's stopped President Grant from railing against "British tyranny," of course, but most people think he's just posturing. Who really wants to go to war over Detroit, after all?

Secondly, The Tombstone Epitaph's 1877 Update already provides the lowdown on Detroit and its current situation. I haven't been to the city since the British invasion and don't intend to go anytime soon. I hear that it's settled down a bit there, but I'm sure tensions are still high, and I wouldn't be surprised if things turned violent. Rumors say General Maniha's army is in the area and may be preparing to take the city back by force. I have no idea how such an offensive will turn out, but I'm glad I'll be miles away should it happen.

## Maritime Provinces

The Maritime Provinces are Canada's three smallest provinces: Nova Scotia, Prince Edward Island, and New Brunswick. They're called the Maritimes because each of them is bordered by the sea on three sides. Of course, that makes them perfect for fishing, and people have been going there to fish for centuries.

Fishing isn't the only occupation in the Maritimes, of course. They also have forestry and trade. But their real fame comes from their shipbuilding. Mariners claim that region has built more

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sailing ships than any other place in the world. I don't know if that's true or not, but they certainly do turn out quite a few, and quality vessels, too. Of course, with ghost rock-powered ships appearing now, and those new steamships, the Maritimes could suffer a bit, unless they can upgrade their facilities and pick up the new techniques.

The Maritimes have gained a bit more popularity these last ten years, for a very simple reason—all three of them are completely below the Winterline. And they already had nice mild weather, so now they're doubly attractive. That's forced their respective governments to crack down on immigration a bit, though—otherwise those three lovely little areas will be completely overrun by newcomers.

## New Brunswick

New Brunswick is the westernmost of the Maritime Provinces. Like its fellow Maritimes Nova Scotia and Prince Edward Island, most of its people make their living from the sea. More than half of the province is surrounded by water. The other half is wedged between the province of Quebec and the state of Maine, and is mainly farmland, particularly in the Saint John River valley.

Large portions of New Brunswick are covered with forests, as well, and the population is split between those who live by the sea and those who live off the forests. The fact that a third of the population is Acadian only adds to the mix. New Brunswick also has several clear subregions, each with its own sense of community—the Miramichi River Valley, for example, has a large Irish population. Not that I'm biased toward my fellow countrymen or anything.

## Fredericton

Fredericton is the provincial capital of New Brunswick. It's located just below the head of the Saint John River, miles inland from the Bay of Fundy. Frederick's Town (the original name) was founded between 1783 and 1785 by Loyalists—what Yankees call Tories—to create a “haven for the King's friends” in the aftermath of the American Revolution. Not surprisingly, it also became a British military headquarters, a stronghold of the Church of England, and an educational center. King's College was given a royal charter in 1828, and became the University of New Brunswick in 1859. The city also has Christ Church Cathedral, which was started in 1846 and finished in 1853. Between those two sites and the military grounds, the city definitely has an aristocratic feel.

That's changed a bit since Confederation, of course. Immigrants, particularly the Irish, have arrived in large numbers, and lumber has become a major industry, as has agriculture. The city's also a shipping center, since it's the perfect place to coordinate between the upper and lower Saint John River. The British still have a sizable garrison in Fredericton, though—they argue that the Union might try claiming the province if they left or weakened their defenses. Most people think they just don't want to leave.

## Saint John

Saint John is the largest city in New Brunswick, located at the mouth of the Saint John River on the Bay of Fundy. The harbor and the river dominate the cityscape. The well-known Reversing Falls are located less than a mile from the center of town, and I definitely recommend a visit—at high tide the water actually flows upstream!



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The city started as a base for timber, trading, and shipbuilding, and quickly became a major port. Its lumberyards supplied timber and lumber to Great Britain and the West Indies, and its boats not only transported lumber, they became a major export themselves. But steam, iron, and ghost rock are taking their toll on Saint John's "wood, wind and sail" economy. Plus, with the Intercolonial Railway goods can be sent overland more quickly; central Canada has flooded Saint John with products of equal quality but lower cost than those produced locally. Local entrepreneurs are considering building factories in town to produce state-of-the-art steam engines for both the railroad and for the shipyards. They hope the workers these places attract will help slow the city's economic decline.

Cultural tensions are also high. Since the 1820s Saint John has received a large number of Scots and Irish immigrants, and riots between the Protestants and the Catholics are far too common. In the 1850s cholera broke out, and the fact that it centered in the poorer Catholic district only increased hostilities. The local bishop, Thomas Connolly, worked with Honoria Conway to found the Sisters of Charity of the Immaculate Conception, who work with the sick and the dying, but I don't know how much help that organization can really provide.

To make matters worse, earlier this year fire raged through the city, destroying its business district, the waterfront, and part of the residential area. The British claim it was the work of American saboteurs, though why they'd attack a city already in trouble is beyond me. Still, a lot of people are getting angry and upset in Saint John and eventually they'll direct that anger at someone. Right now, it's just not clear who that'll be.

## Lepers

Normally you think of the Bible when you hear about lepers, right? Well, not in New Brunswick. It first appeared there in the 1820s, probably brought by sailors. The sad part is that leprosy isn't just a killer, it's also a social disease—if you catch it, people shun you, afraid of getting it themselves, and most lepers wind up cast out of their homes and their cities, living on the charity of others. It's an awful way to live, and probably worse than the ultimate death from the disease.

New Brunswick established a leper colony, or lazaretto, on Sheldrake Island back in 1844. Lepers are sent there, away from their family, and no one is allowed to leave. That doesn't mean people don't escape, though. A few years later a new lazaretto was established at Tracadie, and they say it's more humane than the one at Sheldrake, especially since the Religious Hospitallers of Saint Joseph came from Montreal in '68. Now anyone with leprosy is sent to Tracadie, unless they're Chinese—those are sent to D'Arcy Island in British Columbia. I'm not sure why those unfortunates are singled out for different treatment, and I hate to admit that I didn't get close enough to ask.



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## Nova Scotia

Nova Scotia is almost entirely surrounded by sea, and that affects every aspect of the province, from climate to economy to recreation. The province has an interesting history. It was originally settled by Micmac Indians, the first European settlers were Acadians, and its name is Latin for "New Scotland." It was also the first British colony to receive



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representative government. Needless to say, its cultural identity is a little confused.

That hasn't stopped the province from prospering, however. Nova Scotia's fleet travels the world, taking goods to distant ports and bringing commerce and trade back to the island.

## Halifax

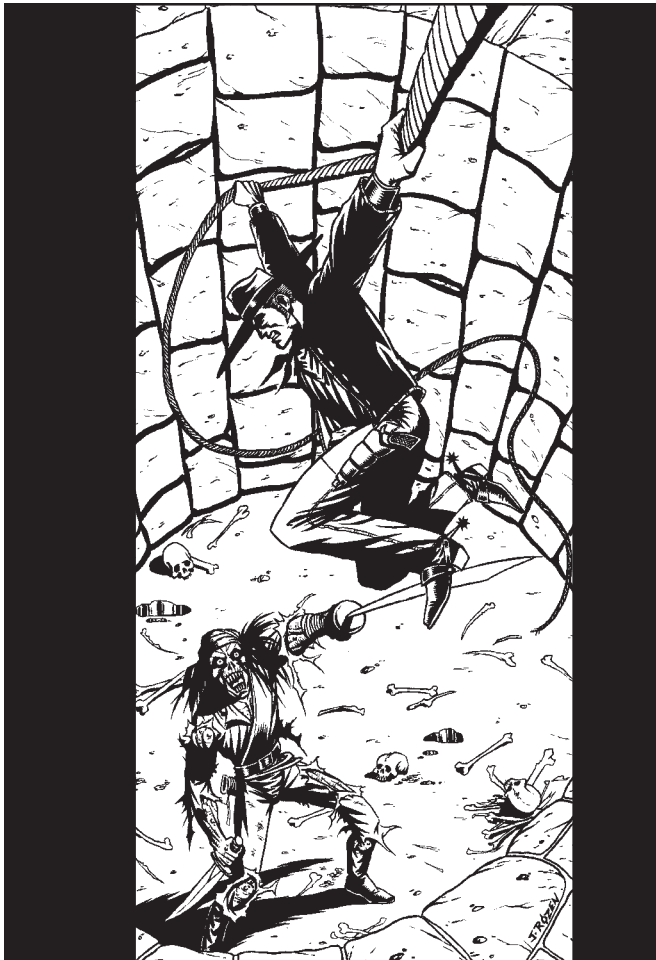
Halifax is the capital of Nova Scotia and the largest city in the Maritimes. It also occupies a strategic location on the province's east coast—the city is known as “Warden of the North”—and residents claim it's one of the world's largest harbors. Halifax was founded in 1749 and

first named Chebucto, but it was renamed Halifax in honor of George Dunk, Earl of Halifax and Chief Lord of Trade and Plantations, who encouraged settlement in the city.

Halifax stretches north and south for several miles along its harbor, flanked to the west by the Halifax Citadel and the Common. The Naval Dockyard occupies a site in the North Suburbs, a working-class district of the city. The South Suburbs and large estates on the Northwest Arm are home to the middle and upper classes. St. Paul's Anglican church, Government House, Province House and other important institutional and residential buildings can be found near the Grand Parade. The Public Gardens were laid out in 1867 and modeled after those found in Britain, but Point Pleasant Park is a wildlife reserve strictly for the military's private use. I tried to peek in there, but a pair of armed guards turned me away—I decided no flowers were worth that much risk.

## Oak Island

During the eighteenth century, there were a lot of pirates operating around Nova Scotia, and naturally that led to stories of buried treasure. The most famous ones center around Oak Island, which still gets tons of visitors each year—probably because no one's found anything there yet. At least, not any treasure. What seekers have found is a pit over a hundred feet deep! This “money pit,” as it's called, is a ways back from the beach, and has foiled dozens of treasure-seekers, but they keep coming back. I've been to see the pit myself, and it certainly is intriguing. Diggers have found several layers or surfaces in there, some of flint but others of charcoal or wood, and each time one's removed it reveals more depth to the shaft but no



What really lies at the bottom of the Treasure Pit?

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treasure. I've heard there are booby-traps as well, which spill seawater into the shaft (apparently brought by channels from the ocean) and block or delay further excavation.

No one knows how the money pit started. Some claim the famous pirate Captain Kidd dug it to hide his treasure. Others say Sir Francis Bacon used it to hide original manuscripts, including the Shakespeare plays he wrote himself. I've heard the French Crown Jewels are also down there, along with the Holy Grail itself! So far, no one's found anything but more pit.

The island itself is a bit of mystery. Its name comes from the fact that oak trees grow all over it. The problem is, the oak isn't native to North America! It usually grows in northern Europe. So someone must have brought seeds across. But who? And why?

## Prince Edward Island

Prince Edward Island is the smallest of the Maritimes, and the smallest of the Canadian provinces. Locals call it PEI, or just "the Island." PEI is crescent-shaped, with sandy white beaches along the northern shores, red sandstone cliffs on the southern edge, and gentle hills in between. Most of the island is agricultural, with over half its land used for farms. They say the island used to be covered with trees, though, before the white man came and chopped them all down to make room. The Micmac have been living here for thousands of years, and claim their ancestors walked onto the island from the mainland, before the waters rose and isolated it. They call the place Epekwitk, which means "resting on the waves."



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When Europeans reached PEI a hundred or so years ago, they settled around Charlottetown Harbor, which the French called Port La Joie. A lot of fishing communities appeared as well, but people stayed away from the North Shore, since sand dunes make it hard to get in and out of the harbors there.

Once the British took over, in the 1760s, PEI was divided into lots and sold off, with each new proprietor required to pay for his land and settle his lot within the next ten years. Most of them didn't. In fact, until about twenty-five years ago, when PEI's roads were completed, a lot of the island hadn't even been traveled, especially away from the Hillsborough River. These days, the Island is about two-thirds Roman Catholic (Irish and French) and one-third Protestant (English and Scottish), with a smattering of Indians left.

For all its small size, PEI is a strong-willed province. It was the site of the original meetings about Confederation, and despite that, the Island almost didn't join. I hear the only reason it did is because people became afraid—not of their future neighbors, but of weird noises and strange lights. Same thing as happened to Newfoundland—it makes you wonder.

Regardless, PEI is lovely, and well worth a visit if only to walk along the rugged hills and lay on the sandy beaches. Just be careful. Some of the people warned me not to go out alone at night, and muttered incomprehensible ramblings about mysterious disappearances and deaths. I couldn't get any more out of them, other than a few harsh words for Macdonald and his "useless excuse for soldiers," but I got the impression the Island might not be as idyllic as it seems.



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## Acadia

Acadia is an interesting place, in part because it's not really a place. At least, not one with a clear boundary, or an established location. The name is derived from Arcadia, the paradise of Greek and Roman myth. Legend says that the name was given by Giovanni de Verrazzano, who explored the coast of North America in 1524 and was struck by its beauty. Several years later, the name "Larcadia" appeared on the map of another Italian. When King Henry IV of France appointed Pierre Chauvin de Tonnetuit lieutenant-general of Canada in 1599, the coasts of "Lacadie" were included in his charter. Over the next hundred years, that name shifted to "l'Acadie," or Acadia, and referred mostly to lands around the Bay of Fundy.

The Acadians are technically French settlers, but for over a century they were cut off from contact with other colonists, and in that time they both adopted their new home and developed their own society. Most of the Acadians were farmers, who reclaimed salt marshes to use for crops—and if you know anything about salt marshes, you know that was a lot of work! They also fished and hunted to supplement the crops. The Acadians were always on good trading terms with the local Indian tribes.

In 1755 Britain required the Acadians to swear allegiance to the British crown, and most of them refused—for religious rather than political reasons, since British allegiance meant they would have to follow the Anglican religion rather than their own Catholicism. The British responded by forcibly expelling the Acadians from Canada, in what was called Le Grand Dérangement. They scattered throughout the United States;

many of them settled to the south in what became Louisiana—these were the early Cajuns. But many of the Acadians refused to leave their homes. They faded back into the woods instead, hiding along the banks and the forests and biding their time. After a few decades the British relented, and allowed Acadians to return to Canada, though their lands and houses had long since been taken; the returning folk had to practically start over again.

These days, the Acadians are a recognized part of the Maritimes' heritage, and many people in the provinces are proud to claim Acadian blood. I've heard stories, though, about Acadians who still live off the land itself, the way their ancestors did, and who won't have any part in the Dominion. Those may be stories, of course—I caught a few glimpses of what looked like men climbing through the trees or boating along the river, but I never got a good look and no one else admitted to seeing anything. I have been told, however, that if you need a guide who knows the Maritimes, particularly the rivers and the woods, the only smart bet is to find an Acadian.



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## Newfoundland

Newfoundland has the oldest non-Indian establishment on North America—a settlement was founded there by Vikings around the year 1000. Of course, by the time fishermen arrived off its coast in the 15th century that settlement was long since gone, but ruins still remain in the area. Newfoundland changed hands a lot, in its early days—the English claimed it in 1583, France protested, and the matter wasn't settled



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until 1763, when the Treaty of Paris awarded Newfoundland and Labrador to Great Britain. The French kept their fishing rights off the west coast, however.

Newfoundland got representative government in 1832, and a parliamentary government in 1855. That's probably why they were less interested in Dominion than most of the other colonies, since their government was already more responsible. In fact, Newfoundland declined the invitation to the early conferences about Confederation, and I hear Macdonald had resigned himself to their not joining. But something changed their mind, and Newfoundland was onboard as one of the provinces when the Dominion finally took effect.

Of course, Macdonald immediately told France that their fishing rights had been revoked. France wasn't too happy about that. They say French ships still appear to fish, but only at night, and only a ways off the shore. The British patrol the area heavily, to make sure those French keep their distance.

## St. John's

St. John's—not to be confused with Saint John in New Brunswick—is the capital and largest city of Newfoundland. I've also been told that it's Canada's oldest city. Located on the eastern side of the Avalon Peninsula, its landlocked harbor is approached through a long, narrow channel and protected by the high hills on which the city itself was built.

The origin of the name St. John's is unknown, but a Portuguese map from the early sixteenth century shows "Rio de San Johem," and a later English letter mentions the "Haven of St. John's." According to popular folklore, the city takes its name from the date on

which John Cabot discovered the island in 1497—June 24th, the feast of St. John the Baptist.

European fishermen had visited the harbor by the early 1500s. By 1583, when Sir Humphrey Gilbert arrived to declare Newfoundland an English colony, a settlement had developed on the north side of the harbor. Its location in the middle of the area the English used to fish made the city a rendezvous for European fishermen and the natural focus for administration and defense on the island. In 1832, when Britain granted Newfoundland a colonial legislature, St. John's became the seat of government.

Sadly, St. John's has suffered several fires, the last in 1846. Each time the rebuilding has been haphazard except in the business district near the harbor. Part of that was because a lot of the land was owned by British companies, and the government couldn't reach the owners to negotiate space for proper streets. As a result, most of the city is like a maze, with narrow, crooked streets that start and stop at random. You'll also see a large cluster of piers along the harbor, since most of the merchants have built their own private piers from their warehouses.

## Beothuk Indians

The story of the Beothuk Indians is one of the oldest legends in Newfoundland, and one of the most depressing. According to the stories, the Beothuk were a tall people with dark eyes and black hair. Judging from the burial sites left behind, the Beothuk probably lived here for at least a thousand years.

The Beothuk never trusted the white men who arrived on their lands, and avoided all contact. Despite this, the Europeans captured many of the



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Beothuk and sold them into slavery, or took them back to the Old World as curiosities. But the real killer was disease—the Beothuk had no resistance against European illnesses, especially the Black Lung and it cut them down with blinding speed. In 1823, a group of



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furriers found three sick and starving Beothuk women. They were the last of the Beothuk Indians. Two of them died within the year, and the third passed away in 1829.

Rumors say she had a son before she died, but I don't know if that's true. If it is, he'd be the last Beothuk left alive.

## Quebec

Quebec is Canada's largest province in terms of area and the second largest in population. The name "Quebec" comes from an Algonquin word meaning "Where the river narrows." The French explorer Samuel de Champlain used the name for the settlement he founded on the St. Lawrence River in 1608. After the Battle of the Plains of Abraham, the British applied the name to the entire province, which had formerly been called New France.

Unfortunately, Quebec has also suffered the most from the Ice Age. Since all of its cities are located along its southern edge, Hellstromme built his fence down there as well. Close to ninety percent of the province is still locked in eternal winter. I can't even imagine how many people might live in the province if all of its space were accessible.

## Montreal

Montreal, located in southwestern Quebec, is the metropolis of the province and the largest city in Canada. It's located on C ele de

Montreal, the largest island in the Hochelaga Archipelago, right where the St. Lawrence and Ottawa rivers collide. Montreal is easily one of the most important cities in North America, and possibly even the world—it's a major industrial, commercial, and financial center, and a railway and maritime bridgehead as well. I think it's safe to say that what happens in Montreal determines a large part of what goes on throughout all of Canada.

Back in the 1760s, Montreal's economy depended on the fur trade. When the fur trade started to dry up, it was replaced by import/export. The city kept growing, absorbing surrounding cities as it went. By the 1820s its population outnumbered that in Quebec City. The new merchants founded the Bank of Montreal in 1817, and the Committee of Trade in 1822. They expanded the St. Lawrence canal system, deepened the channel to Quebec City, and turned Montreal into a major seaport.

Interestingly enough, Montreal has a higher percentage of English-speakers than anywhere else in Quebec. That fact alone has helped it grow, both since it became British in 1763 and since Confederation ten years ago. It hasn't exactly endeared the city to the rest of the province, though. I heard a lot of muttering in Quebec City and in various towns, about how Montreal had been "corrupted" by the English and no longer provided a safe haven for "their people." I gathered, from asking a few subtle questions and buying a whole lot of drinks at every stop, that "their people" means the Quebecois. Most of the province is of French stock, you see, and Catholic. I thought that Canada allowed either religion and either language, but people in Quebec claim there's definitely some favoritism towards English and Protestantism. I don't know if that's



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true, or just the old "grass is always greener," but a lot of them were saying it, and pretty loudly. I was just glad I was American, and Irish to boot!

Montreal is visually dominated by Mont Royal, a small mountain of volcanic origin. Old Montreal (or Vieux Montreal, to use the French) was built on an elevated site near the Place d'Armes, though little remains of that now—the walls were torn down at the start of this century, to make room for new houses and businesses. Montreal is a thoroughly modern city now—it even has streetcars, which I haven't seen much outside of New York. The city reminds me of New York, too, in its hustle and bustle. There's certainly a lot going on around there.

## Quebec City

Quebec City is the capital of the province, located on the north shore of the St. Lawrence River where it meets the Riviere Saint-Charles. As I mentioned above, Quebec means, "narrowing of the river" and it's easy to understand why. Here the St. Lawrence narrows to a width of less than a mile and navigation is made difficult by a group of islands, the largest of which is Île d'Orleans. A promontory called Cap-Diamant dominates the site and was used effectively as a fortification, earning Quebec City the name "Gibraltar of North America."

For several thousand years, Indian hunters and fishermen occupied the site of Quebec City. In 1535, Jacques Cartier discovered a large Iroquois village whose inhabitants lived by fishing, hunting, and the cultivation of corn. Sometime between 1543 and 1608, when Samuel de Champlain arrived at the site, these Indians had disappeared and been



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replaced by the more nomadic Indians of the Algonquin nation.

Before the development of steam—or ghost rock—power, Quebec City held a dominant position as a port of entry and exit for ocean-going vessels. It quickly became the transfer port for domestic and foreign trade, such as furs and timber, as well as the arrival and departure point for travelers and immigrants to North America. From the beginning, its location made Quebec City a political, administrative and military center, and it's still important today, even if Montreal has eclipsed it somewhat. Quebec City is much more French, though, and not quite as cosmopolitan.

Quebec City is divided into Lower Town and Upper Town. Lower Town is the oldest portion, between the port and the promontory, and still contains the residential and commercial center. Upper Town, built on the promontory itself, houses the religious institutions, administrative areas, and military barracks. Upper Town is also the location of Quebec City's military fortifications.

Prior to the British conquest, Lower Town stretched along the port toward the Intendant's Palace, to the north of the promontory. This century has seen the town break out of its fortified confines and stretch westwards on the promontory, along the banks of the Riviere Saint-Charles and to the foot of the north face of the promontory. Many of these newer buildings are made of wood, and recent fires have devastated them, destroying whole city blocks at a time. I hear the city is establishing fire brigades now to protect itself, which is probably a smart idea. I've also heard some nasty rumors about the fires themselves—seems nobody can figure out how so many fires have been springing up so quickly, and most



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people think the flames had a little help—of the human kind. Myself, I'm not sure any normal person could cause fires like that. Given the things I've seen and heard, I have to wonder—what if something is causing it? Something that isn't exactly human?



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## Lake Memphremagog

Lake Memphremagog is a long finger lake running south from the town of Magog, just across the border from Newport, Vermont. Nestled between the snowy mountains of the area, the lake is both deep and cold.

Since the end of the eighteenth century, the Indians have told tales of a giant sea serpent in the lake. Although descriptions of the serpent vary from tale to tale, most agree that the creature is about thirty to forty feet long and has large tusks or horns on its head. The beast is supposedly quite vicious and attacks anyone who gets too close to it. Relatively few white folks have ever seen the monster—which some call the Memphre—but that hasn't stopped the Indians from telling the tales. Maybe they hope they can scare settlers away and off their land.

In fact, in recent years there's been an increase in the frequency of the sightings. I even hear there's a British zoologist who's interested in visiting the lake and determining the truth of these stories. I myself spent several days along the water's edge, watching closely—I did see something swelling the water at around dusk one night, like the prow of a ship but without any ship, but if that was the Memphre it didn't actually break the surface. Maybe it's shy.



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## Ontario

More Canadians live in Ontario than in any other province, nearly one out of every three Canadians. Ontario is the country's second-largest province by area, too; only Quebec is larger.

The province's population distribution is completely uneven, though. The southern area is only a tenth of the province in terms of land, but has nine-tenths of its population. That's because the south has most of the farmland, so the agriculture and industry are centered there.

To the north, Ontario is mainly forest and rock, full of natural resources but not that good for settling—especially now, when that's all buried under snow and ice. It is pretty, though, especially the rivers and lakes. Actually, the province's name is Iroquois for "beautiful water." I have to admit that the place lives up to the description.

Ontario benefits heavily from its location at the heart of Canada. Its waterways and railroads connect the Maritimes to the Pacific coast. Southern Ontario cuts like a wedge into the Union, which means it's close to several large American cities.

These cities are important markets for Ontario's resources and manufactured goods. Unfortunately, the current tension between the Union and the British has placed a damper on trade. Even so, Ontario remains Canada's most prosperous and important province. Smugglers in small, fast boats often sneak past British patrols to transport highly-demanded goods in both directions. Unless the future holds something truly bizarre—and anything is possible these days—I think Ontario's only going to get even wealthier and more influential with time.



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## Toronto

Toronto's the capital city of Ontario and one of the largest cities in Canada (though it is smaller than Montreal). Toronto lies along a waterfront near the western end of Lake Ontario and it's the commercial and political center of the province.

Toronto has a long history. Long before the Europeans arrived, the site of the future city was used by Indians to travel between Lake Ontario and Lake Huron. In the early 1600s, French traders began to use the route, too. In 1750, they built Fort Rouille on the site, but it was destroyed only nine years later during one of the battles of the French and Indian War.

After the British conquered Canada, they purchased the land around Lake Ontario from the Mississauga Indians. John Graves Simcoe, the first lieutenant governor of Upper Canada, was impressed by the area's natural harbor, and moved the provincial capital there from Newark. He called his new town York, and finished it in 1794. York lay on low, marshy ground beside Lake Ontario and quickly earned the nickname "Muddy York." Almost all the buildings were made of wood, including the church and provincial parliament building. During the War of 1812, the Americans captured York. They looted houses and burned the parliament building to the ground. Being stubborn sorts, the Canadians rebuilt York afterward, and the town grew steadily. Over time, the town spread north away from the lakefront along its main street, Yonge Street. Like Dundas Street, which runs westward, it provided settlers with easy access to York.

By 1834, York had a population of over 9000 people. That same year, the city changed its name to Toronto, an Indian word that means "meeting place." The

city's first mayor was William Lyon Mackenzie—yes, the same one who pushed for political reform in Upper Canada.

During the 1840s and 1850s, Toronto grew as a port and as a capital city. The construction of the railroad confirmed its place as a transportation center, and linked Toronto with Montreal, New York, Detroit, and Georgian Bay. Factories started popping up as well, and attracting more workers—in the last twenty years Toronto has grown from 30,000 people to over 100,000. Its major products right now are farm machinery, clothing, shoes, metal goods, and railroad cars. That last one is particularly important, since the Transcontinental Railway is finally running. With a near monopoly on railcar production, Toronto could actually threaten Montreal as the leading Canadian city for industry and technology.



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## Ottawa

The capital of Canada is Ottawa, located on the Ottawa River on Ontario's eastern boundary with Quebec, over a hundred miles west of Montreal. The city's name is probably from an Algonquin word meaning "to trade," which would make sense—the Algonquin were supposed to travel and trade a lot, and the Ottawa River and its tributaries provide the most direct route between the St. Lawrence River and the country's interior. Fur traders used the same route to ferry their goods back to Montreal, and small outposts still exist along the valley.

In 1826, Lieutenant Colonel John By ordered construction of the Rideau Canal near Chaudiere Falls and the mouths of the Rideau and Gatineau



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ivers. The canal was a natural base of operations and quickly attracted contractors, laborers, and a small community of merchants, tradesmen, and other professionals. By 1827, a sizable town called Bytown had sprung up on the site, although the provincial government didn't formally recognize it until 1850. The lumber industry also contributed to Bytown's growth, and by the 1830s it was the largest settlement in the Ottawa Valley. In the 1850s, the power of Chaudiere and Rideau Falls was used to saw logs into lumber for sale to the American market. This made the city even more prosperous, and in 1855 it was formally incorporated as Ottawa.

Over the last decade, Ottawa's become one of the largest milling operations in the world, accompanied by huge cutting, driving, and barging operations. Once the city was connected to the Grand Trunk Railway and the American rail networks, Ottawa's ability to supply lumber increased dramatically, as did its fortunes. The railroad also made Ottawa a serious candidate for the permanent capital of Canada, competing with places like Toronto and Kingston. I hear the Canadians ultimately put the matter to Queen Victoria herself, to prevent any charges of favoritism or bribery. She chose Ottawa, for whatever reason, and its Parliament Buildings were started in 1859. I hear they got the last one finished just in time for the Dominion to begin in 1867.

From what I understand, Ottawa's developed some serious tension lately. Half of the city is still centered around the lumber industry, and wants to devote more money to keeping Ottawa on the cutting edge. The other half is focused on the politics and administrative duties, and would rather forget all that sweaty labor in favor of more dignified pursuits. It's getting to be a real class

struggle, laborer against politician, and things could get ugly if something isn't done. I tend to favor the labor side, myself, but that's probably because I consider myself working-class. The fact that half or more of the laborers are fellow Irish might also have something to do with it.



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## Manitoba

Manitoba's called the "keystone" province of Canada because it's located exactly in the center of the Dominion. Created by the Manitoba Act of 1870, the province started as a tiny rectangle right where the Red and Assiniboine rivers meet—all it included was the Red River Colony. That changed almost immediately, though, with Macdonald giving them a lot more land all around. The province was originally a focus for the fur trade, but as trapping diminished the focus shifted to agriculture, particularly as more settlers arrived. It's also one of only four provinces completely protected by the Winterline, and the only place where the actual fence and the apparent protective border are not the same. I'd love to know how Riel managed that trick, and I know I'm not the only one interested.

## Red River Settlement

The Red River Colony was the first permanent settlement in what became the province of Manitoba. Founded in 1812 by the Scottish Earl of Selkirk, the Colony was intended as a place for farmers who'd lost their lands back in Scotland. At that time, the Hudson's Bay Company controlled most of what is now western Canada and granted a huge portion of it to Selkirk for his colony.

Lord Selkirk called the settlement



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Assiniboia, but most folks called it the Red River Colony because of its proximity to Red River—certainly a much easier name to remember, and to write down.

When the first settlers arrived in 1812, they found traders of the North West Company already there. This was a rival of HBC, and they probably worried that the new colonists would weaken their position in the area. Plus, most of the existing inhabitants were Metis, who resented the sudden influx of full Europeans. Several skirmishes occurred, with the Metis usually the victors, until finally the Earl himself arrived in 1817 with soldiers. Then in 1821, HBC and the North West Company merged, leaving the Metis as the area's only rebels. Crops were destroyed by frost in 1817, and by locusts in 1818 and 1819. Then in 1826, a tremendous flood wiped out a large portion the settlement.

The string of disasters increased tension, especially when rumors surfaced that the Metis had cursed the settlement. That's foolishness, of course, but people were upset and looking for someone to blame.

Gradually, though, the Metis began to adjust. Most of them settled onto narrow farms along the river, and went out onto the plains twice a year to hunt buffalo. The Metis quickly outnumbered the Scottish immigrants, but people were getting used to each other and the threat of violence was slowly fading. The first Catholic church, St.-Boniface, was built in 1818 and a school soon followed. The Anglicans arrived in 1820 and established their own missions in the area.

Lord Selkirk died in 1820, and the HBC reclaimed the settlement—his heirs formally returned the colony to HBC in 1836. Unfortunately for the company, the area was filled with independent fur

traders, mostly Metis, and so its profits were never enough to sustain the colony. By 1849, HBC had given up trying to control Red River. Then things changed. Railways started reaching the area, and so did steamboats. More people began to travel to or through Red River, and the settlement gained mail service. Red River was no longer isolated—and that meant Canada was suddenly worried the Americans might want it.

I've already talked about the Red River Rebellion, and about Louis Riel. Suffice it to say that Canada was probably relieved to hand Manitoba over to him. Riel was Metis, true, but at least he was Canadian.

Since Manitoba's formation, it's become the undisputed center of the Metis culture. Most of the inhabitants are Metis, speak French, and practice Catholicism. A few English-speaking Protestants remain, of course, but not many—they just don't feel welcome there. The Quebecois, on the other hand, are greeted as long-lost cousins, which I suppose in a way they are. Indians are also welcomed in Manitoba, and many of the tribes visit there on a regular basis. They say Manitoba is the best place to find a plains scout or a trapper, and they're probably right.

## Winnipeg

Winnipeg is the exception to the Manitoba rule, the one place in the province where the Metis are outnumbered. That's deliberate, too—apparently Riel knew that, if the province was going to flourish, it had to have at least one place where non-Metis didn't feel unwelcome. So he designated Winnipeg for that honor.

The city is located at the intersection of the Red and Assiniboine Rivers, less than one hundred miles north of the



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border with Minnesota and almost precisely midway between the Atlantic and Pacific oceans. It's been called "Bull's Eye of the Dominion" as well as the "Gateway to the West." Winnipeg has surprisingly mild weather as well, probably because it receives more winter sunshine than any other Canadian city. The city's name comes from the Cree name for the lake to the north, win-nipi, meaning "murky water."

The area attracted fur traders as early as 1738, but the nucleus of the future city arose from the construction of a general store by Henry McKenney in 1862. His store was built where a fur trapper trail came down the Assiniboine River to Fort Garry.

Until 1873, when Winnipeg was incorporated as a city, the settlement remained a relatively unimportant part of the larger Red River Colony. When the first city council meeting was held in 1874, the city had a population of 3700 and was little more than a collection of shacks. It's still not much more than that today, although I suspect that's going to change with the new railway linking it to the rest of the Dominion.

River lots and fur trade routes shaped street patterns in the city. The "North End" is the home of most of the city's Slavs and Jews, while the prosperous and politically dominant Anglo-Saxons are concentrated in the west and south of the settlement. Commerce centers on Portage Avenue and Main Street, along the riverbank.

The buildings in Winnipeg are built according to an architectural style known as "Red River Frame," which uses vertical and horizontal logs. Public buildings and expensive houses are built of limestone in imported styles. Riel and his government meet here, but Riel spends most of his time back in Red River, in his family's old house.

## Grantown

This Metis town was established by Cuthbert Grant in the 1830s. Grant was the leader of the Metis at that time, and in 1828 the HBC had made him Warden of the Plains, tasked with policing the fur trade and general business in the area. They also gave him a large tract of land at White Horse Plains, west of the Red River Settlement, and that's where he set Grantown.

Grant talked the Catholic Church into establishing a mission, St. Francois-Xavier, at Grantown, which made his community a religious and educational center for the area. This continued even after Grant himself died in 1854.

Grantown is now on the outskirts of Winnipeg (since the capital's expanded), and many of the Metis involved in government live in Grantown but work in Winnipeg. Grantown has resisted all attempts to expand or diversify, and is still entirely Metis in population.

## Narcisse

This is a small town in Manitoba, and I wouldn't normally mention it except that some of our readers have a thing about snakes. If you're one of them, don't go to this town! Every spring and fall, the place is literally overrun with snakes—I've seen it myself, and the ground is completely covered! I've heard people estimate that there were over 70,000 of the things at one time! Sure, most of them seem to be garters, which aren't very dangerous, but you never know. Nor does anyone know why the things are so attracted to Narcisse, but every fall and spring they show up, slithering their way to the marshes nearby, or back again. It's more than a little creepy, if you ask me.



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## British Columbia

British Columbia is Canada's most westerly province, and the third-largest after Quebec and Ontario. Most of the province is mountains, with forests in the middle and plains to the northeast. People generally live around the shores of sheltered Georgia Strait in the southwest or along the north-south valleys in the southern half of the province.

The province's real claim to fame, of course, is that ghost rock was discovered there in 1870. So far, this is the only sign of ghost rock in Canada. That's made BC a very popular place for prospectors and miners. It has also meant that a lot of Americans have crossed the border, hoping to strike it rich. Officially Canada forbids such trespassing, but the people of BC are surprisingly unconcerned. One old fellow told me "they spend their money here, just like we do, and they break their backs on the rock, just like we do. If one o' them strikes it rich, more power to 'im. He'll probably settle here anyways, and that'll make him Canadian, too."

Of course, the fact that British Columbia didn't join the Dominion until 1871, the year after the ghost rock was found, may have something to do with the people's attitude. Some of those prospectors from the Union have been there longer than the government has!

One of BC's other claims to fame is that it actually convinced James Macdonald to agree to terms. British Columbia refused to join the Dominion unless the Winterline was extended all the way to the coast and a Transcontinental railway ran to Vancouver. But local leaders had seen how the Winterline and the railway usually ran side-by-side. If that held

true for them, only a small sliver would be shielded, so they insisted that at least half of the province fall under the Winterline. I think they knew the other provinces would never allow it if they asked to be completely shielded, since so many others had to deal with the winter in their own area. But Macdonald agreed to their terms without even a fight, and the Winterline divides British Columbia neatly in half, with the lower portion experiencing mild temperatures and the upper half as cold as anywhere in the Arctic.

## Victoria

The capital of British Columbia, Victoria is on the southern tip of Vancouver Island, less than one hundred miles south of the city of Vancouver. From this vantage point, Victorians view the bordering Juan de Fuca and Haro straits, backed by the Olympic Mountains of Washington to the south and the San Juan Islands to the east, with the majestic, volcanic peak of Mount Baker in the distance. The area around the city has a number of low hills interspersed with relatively flat areas, and it's bordered on the west by the fjord-like Saanich Inlet and the richly forested higher elevations of Malahat Ridge and the Sooke Hills.

The settlement site for Victoria was chosen in 1843 by James Douglas, chief factor of the HBC's Pacific coast headquarters. They had been based near the mouth of the Columbia River, but the United States and Britain were still negotiating their boundaries and the HBC wanted an alternate location in case the border wound up cutting off their present site—which is exactly what happened in 1846. Douglas picked the present site for Fort Victoria because it bordered large tracts of land suitable



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for agriculture. Victoria stayed small, though, with less than a thousand people in town, until the Fraser River Gold Rush occurred in 1858. Then it bloomed into a major supply center and jumping-off point. It was incorporated into a city in 1862. The nearby Esquimalt Harbor was designated as a naval base by the British Admiralty in 1865. It's become a major military base for the British Fleet on the Pacific Ocean. It is sometimes visited by ships of the Far East Squadron.

As the dominant urban center in British Columbia, Victoria was a natural choice for the new province's capital city. Its population has swelled in the past few years, as a combination of British soldiers and administrators have come to the region.

The ghost rock has brought prospectors and fortune hunters from across Canada and the Union, as has the new railroad. The British are getting a little wary of



96 strangers up in BC, though, and I've got a feeling they might start policing its arrivals more heavily. I was certainly given a thorough interrogation when I arrived—I don't think they have much use for reporters up there.

## Vancouver Island

Victoria is only one spot on this large and lovely island in BC, and I'm surprised more people haven't started settlements along its stretch. Vancouver Island is surrounded by waterways—Burrard Inlet, the Strait of Georgia, and the Fraser River—that provide an excellent sheltered deep-sea port, convenient access to the Pacific Ocean and an easy route to the rich agricultural lands of the Fraser River

Lowland and the interior of the province. According to local legends, it was settled by Indians several thousand years ago, mainly at Locarno Beach and at Marpole.

The first European settlement on the island was Fort Langley in 1827, but the first urban center was New Westminster in 1859. In the last decade, three English entrepreneurs obtained land in the area and built an unsuccessful brickyard. More recently, several New Westminster entrepreneurs established logging camps, sawmills, and three small settlements on the shores of Burrard Inlet. I fully expect more people will realize how much there is to gain on this island, and will settle there and start their own companies of one sort or another.

A good, if somewhat odd, example of this is the newly founded Vancouver Moving Pictures Co. A mad scientist by the name of Matthias Scrood has come up with some cockamamie idea about projecting a series of still photographs on a screen to make them look like they're moving. I'd have to see that to believe it, but the professor's prototype wasn't working when I stopped by.

## Barkerville

I love success stories, and Barkerville is one of the best. In 1858, gold was found on the Fraser River, and prospectors came from all over. As the lower Fraser was tapped out, these gold-seekers started following the river north, finally reaching the creeks of the Cariboo. In 1861 a party led by William "Dutch Bill" Dietz found gold there, in a creek they named Williams Creek in Dutch Bill's honor. More people gathered there to try repeating the feat, and the town of Richfield sprang up. William "Billy" Barker was one of the people who settled there—Barker was English,

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and had come to Victoria in 1858. He decided to try his luck downstream. In 1862, Barker and seven others formed the Barker Company and sank a shaft below the canyon at Williams Creek. Everyone thought he was insane. But forty feet down, Barker and his pals struck it rich.

It didn't take long for a series of cabins and tents to spring up next to the Barker claims, and Barkerville grew rapidly. Soon it had saloons, dance halls, general stores, and boarding houses to serve the needs of the miners. All the buildings were raised up on posts to avoid the mud, and wooden plank sidewalks were added soon after. In 1865, they completed the Cariboo Wagon Road, to run food and supplies; stage companies began running to Barkerville as well. In 1868, the city burnt to the ground, but even that couldn't stop it—ninety percent of the town was rebuilt within six weeks. Barker himself was having the time of his life, as the unofficial town leader and a general hero to his fellow prospectors and miners. He married a saloon girl, started a Cariboo Literary Society, and generally enjoyed his new fame and fortune.

Eventually, of course, the gold ran out. So did Barker's wife. The rest of the inhabitants soon followed, heading for greener pastures and leaving the immigrant prospector as poor and lonely as when he'd arrived. Barker packed up his things and got ready to move on himself, but decided to try his luck one last time before he left. He sank a new shaft, not far from his original one—and struck it rich a second time. Only this time it wasn't gold, but an odd mineral that almost seemed to sing—ghost rock.

Word spread quickly, and within two weeks Barkerville was back and bigger than ever—it hasn't slowed since. When I visited, I saw at least three full-scale ghost rock mining operations, and

there may have been more. The town doesn't have a formal charter yet, though there's word that one's coming—it's well below the Winterline, so that's an added draw. But all the land in the area belongs to the Barker Company, which means he gets a share of everything found on it. Barker's taken a second wife, and he's enjoying the return of his popularity—I hear he's even going to speak with some geologists soon, on what he calls his "intuitive dowsing techniques."

The strange thing is, according to one fellow I met, Barker shouldn't have found any ghost rock there at all. The area had already been picked over for gold, and if the ghost rock had been around, someone would have found it before that. All I can say is, I wish I had that man's luck.



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## Grand Canyon of Stikine River

Canada's a beautiful country, with a lot of incredible sights. One of them can be found about 275 miles north of Kitwanga, British Columbia. The so-called Grand Canyon of the Stikine River twists and turns for 60 miles to the west. Its sheer walls at times climb to over 1,000 feet and in many places along the canyon floor it resembles its larger cousin south of the border.

Halfway through the canyon, the intersecting Tanzilla and Stikine rivers are forced through a constriction barely six feet wide at low water. Logs have been swept into this abyss and never surfaced in one piece. That's why the canyon's never been completely rafted; it's just too dangerous. At the western end of the canyon, the settlement of Telegraph Creek grew up at the head of the Stikine River. It's the only town on the 400-mile run of the river, and even the Ice Age didn't drive the



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townspeople away. They get plenty of driftwood from the canyon and use it to build nice warm fires in their fireplaces and stoves.



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In the past few years, tales have begun to circulate of strange lights and noises at the base of the canyon. As is usually the case with such tales, there aren't many specific details, just a collection of half-remembered stories and misinformation. The only common element of all these tales is that the unusual activity occurs during the new moon, when the sky is at its darkest. If I thought there was anything to these stories, I'd have investigated them further, but I suspect it's just stories told to frighten children and tourists. Besides, it's too cold up there to wander around for long. So, if you're looking for something unusual in British Columbia, I wouldn't look for it here. The view is certainly spectacular, but it's not sinister.

## Lake Okanagan



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Remember I mentioned Lake Memphremagog, in Quebec? Well, Lake Okanagan must be its spiritual twin—Okanagan is the reputed home of Ogotopog, a fabled aquatic monster. The Salish Indians call it "snake in the lake," while the Chinook call it "wicked one" and "great beast in the lake." You can find representations of the monsters in Indian petroglyphs that predate the coming of the white man. Ogotopog is usually described as having the head of a sheep or a horse and a long serpentine neck. The beast swims with an undulating motion, which is why most sightings report seeing several humps moving rapidly through the water.

The name "Ogotopog" is a palindrome—a word spelled the same backwards and forwards—taken from a comic English music-hall song, "Ogotopog Song." Don't ask me why a supposedly ancient sea serpent would have a modern name. Lake Okanagan has temperamental weather conditions, which might explain why there are so many tales of this mysterious beast. Apparently the lake has never been fully charted, either, at least in terms of depth, so in theory something as large as Ogotopog could hide within its waters. You know I'm not one to tell stories like this lightly, but I think there's something genuinely weird happening at Lake Okanagan. Whether it's a giant sea serpent, I'm not so sure. I just think someone should investigate the lake and find out what's really going on.

## Northwest Territories

Originally called Rupert's Land and the North-Western Territory, this vast region northwest of central Canada was acquired in 1870 from the HBC and Great Britain. It was getting the Territories that made Canada one of the largest countries in the world today.

The Territories were inhabited by a bunch of Indian tribes long before Europeans ever arrived. Most of those tribes, like the Eskimo and the Dene, were nomadic and lived by hunting and fishing. The Vikings showed up around 1000 A.D., sailing to the Eastern Arctic from their settlements in Greenland, but they didn't stay. In 1576, a man named Martin Frobisher arrived, seeking the Northwest Passage, but the region's severe ice conditions prevented him from exploring the area fully. It wasn't until 1770 that a European really explored the area, when Samuel Hearne from HBC traveled from Churchill to the Coppermine River,

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right across the arctic mainland. Unfortunately for him, HBC wasn't interested in what he found. Instead, it was Alexander Mackenzie of the rival North West Company who pushed north from Fort Chipewyan on Lake Athabasca in 1789 to discover and follow the course of a river that now bears his name. Fur trading posts were quickly established along his route and in tributary areas, and were eventually taken over by the HBC. If they'd listened to Hearne, they would have gotten there a lot earlier.

People kept exploring the Arctic Archipelago for the fabled Northwest Passage, and also in a search for the globe's geographic north pole. Sir John Franklin's expedition disappeared mysteriously in 1845, and the numerous search parties actually found out more about the Territories than they did about Franklin's whereabouts. One of them, led by Sir Robert McClure, even stumbled upon the Northwest Passage in 1853. Unfortunately, it proved useless to commerce—so much for 300 years obsessing about a route from east to west! Of course, some people claim that wasn't the real Northwest Passage, and continue searching. I think they just don't know when to quit.

I've heard talk about dividing the North-West Territories up into districts, to make it easier to organize. That may just be a rumor, though—right now it's not like there are a whole lot of people to be organized.

## The Yukon

The Yukon is the westernmost territory in Northern Canada. Most of it is a frozen wasteland, with massive glaciers still covering the ground. Kluane National Park, in the

southwestern corner of the Yukon, is said to include the largest nonpolar ice fields in the world. To be honest, while it is beautiful I don't understand why anyone would ever actually go out there. Everything is frozen! Yet somebody must be there, because the Mounties maintain two companies just to watch over the Yukon.

One thing the Yukon does have, actually, is religion. An Anglican missionary, Robert McDonald, has been here for the last fifteen years, traveling from village to village and fort to fort and preaching to the Indians. And a lot of them are listening. Some say he's been translating the Bible into the local Takudh dialect. I've also heard he was responsible for getting the Mounties to visit throughout the area. If even half of what people say is true, this McDonald is one hell of a man. I just hope he's careful—I've heard strange stories about the things out in the wilderness, and not every Indian is friendly.

## Fort Whoop-Up

In the history of the whiskey trade and of the Mounties, Fort Whoop-Up is a legend. It stands for everything that can go wrong in the west: lawless American desperadoes dealing noxious "whiskey" to an Indian population unaccustomed to alcohol; buffalo hides by the hundreds of thousands being shipped out, leaving nothing but rotting carcasses and starving Natives; and a general atmosphere of anarchy with no accountability.

What happened was this. When HBC turned over the North-West Territories in 1869, a bunch of opportunists moved in. These "free traders," as they called themselves, quickly learned that the



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most profitable business was trading the Indians whiskey for buffalo robes and horses. Down here, it's been illegal to sell liquor to Indians since 1832. But Canada didn't have any laws against it, so the traders smuggled their hootch across the frontier and set up trading posts.

Whoop-up was the first, built in 1869 by J. J. Healy and A. B. Hamilton. Officially it was named Fort Hamilton, but nobody actually called it that. The original building burned down a year later—no one knows if that was deliberate or accidental—but a second structure was quickly put up, with bastions at two corners, a loop-holed stockade, and rooms built into the outer wall.



A trader flees Fort Whoop-Up.

The trade devastated the Indians, of course. Whiskey made them sick and violent, and the buffalo they lived on were being depleted rapidly. Not that the traders cared. Some of them even claimed to be doing a public service, eliminating a potential Indian threat.

Fortunately, news reached Ottawa, and the Prime Minister. The Mounties were formed, and headed west. When the free traders heard the Mounties were coming, they buried or hid their unsold stock and fled. Probably they planned to come back after the Mounties left. Instead, the Mounties took one look at this nice solid fort and made it their first outpost. That was it for the whiskey trade! The Mounties still control Fort Whoop-Up to this day, and some claim their rapport with the Indians stems from that first encounter, when they saved them from the evils of the demon whiskey. I've visited Fort Whoop-Up, and it's a neat, orderly place, staffed by friendly Mounties and a few hardy locals. Still, the fort itself is a bit rough-hewn, and I can easily picture it housing traders and con men.

## Arctic Islands

Technically this chain of islands isn't part of the Dominion. Great Britain claims them directly, based on their discovery by Martin Frobisher in the 1570s. Nobody really lives there, but it's a busy place anyway, because of all the whales—they say whaling ships from at least four different nations can be seen around the islands at the right time of year. I've heard that Canada wants them, if only to be consistent, and that Great Britain isn't arguing. Personally, I think the Dominion just wants to start taxing all those foreign whalers, or to drive them off so locals can take over.



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## CHAPTER FOUR: ALASKA

North America is divided between four powers: the Dominion of Canada, the United States of America, the Confederated States of America, and the Empire of Mexico. Right? Wrong! There's a fifth in there, and most people don't even know it. Alaska.

That's right, Alaska. Physically, you'd think it was part of the Dominion, but it isn't. So what exactly is it? That, my faithful readers, is a bit of a puzzle.

### Climate and Terrain

Alaska is big. Yes, it's bigger than Texas, even. It's also all the way to the northwest, as far as you can get without leaving North America. Alaska's made up of three peninsulas, several islands (the Aleutians, in the south by the Alaska Peninsula, Kodiak Island to the southwest next to the Kenai, and the Alexander Archipelago to the southeast), and a series of mountains (the Aleutian Range on the Alaska Peninsula, and the Coast Range and Saint Elias Mountains, to the southeast), and vast flatlands in between.

All of mainland Alaska is caught within the Ice Age, so don't expect any warm summer days. On the Alaska Peninsula it's foggy, damp, and cold, with harsh winds. The Panhandle, running down to the southwest against British Columbia, tends to be milder, with heavy rains but little snow. But the interior of Alaska is the most severe, with long hard winters and bitter cold year-round. Most people, not surprisingly, avoid the

north (called the Arctic Slope) and center of the place if at all possible. I'd stay away from the Alaska Peninsula and the Aleutians as well, unless you like volcanoes—they've got more than seventy of the things, all still active.

### History

According to a scholar-turned-trapper I met, Alaska was first discovered by hunters from Siberia (that's in Russia) who followed Ice Age animals like the woolly mammoth across the Bering Land Bridge. The Bridge is a 1000-mile-wide span of ice linking Russia to North America. But don't go looking for it—the Bridge disappeared thousands of years ago, when the last Ice Age ended. The earliest people probably arrived around 12,000 years ago. A second wave, around 6000 years ago, brought the people who we've come to know as the Eskimos.

Europeans didn't see Alaska again until 1725, when Peter the Great of Russia commissioned a Danish sea captain, Vitus Bering, to explore the Northwest coast. This feat is credited with the "official" discovery of Alaska by Russia and the first reliable information on the land. Bering established Russia's claim to Northwestern North America. Bering died from scurvy later that winter on an island named after him, Bering Island. It took more than fifty years before the Russians finally established a settlement, in 1784, on Kodiak Island.





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About this time the British, Spanish, and French were also exploring the coast of Alaska. Everyone was after furs, of course, and no one was concerned with excess, which wound up depleting the fur resources and killing most of the Aleut natives. To stop that, the Russian American Company was chartered in 1799 and granted a monopoly on the American fur trade by the Russian ruler, Tsar Paul I. The charter empowered the company to take possession of all Russian-occupied territories above 55° north latitude and to establish new settlements not only in that area but also to the south, provided this did not cause conflict with other powers.

In 1804, the original settlement of Sitka was attacked and held captive by the Tlingit Indians. The Russians had to resort to a combined naval-military operation to drive the natives out. In 1805, the Tlingit Indians killed all of the Russian residents that were living at present day Yakutat. But that same year saw the first Russian shipment of furs to China—why they'd need furs is beyond me.

Other nations continued to encroach on the Russian territory, and in 1821 they restricted the waters, forbidding foreigners from landing anywhere but regular ports of call. In 1833 Fort St. Michael was constructed near the mouth of the Yukon River, to allow for tighter control of that waterway. Baranof Castle was built at Sitka in 1836, and Fort Yukon was established in 1847. Of course, the local Indians demonstrated that forts weren't always safe—in 1851 they overran Fort Nulato on the upper Yukon River and slaughtered almost everyone there.

The problem is, despite all the resources found there, Alaska was just too far away from Russia—the cost of administering it long-distance was proving prohibitive. The fur trade, Russia's original reason for claiming the area, is fading fast. Plus the eternal

winter makes it even less attractive to settlers than it was before. Russia's in some trouble here. I've heard from sources that they've been looking to sell Alaska off. In fact, if the stories are true, the Union was interested, but what with the war they can't afford it. Maybe if things ever get resolved, I guess. In the meantime, Alaska just sits there, waiting.



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## Government

Alaska's government—isn't. That's the simplest way to put it. When Russia was in charge, they had a military governor running the place, with troops dispersed to several forts and reporting back. But Russia's up and left, and the only troops in Alaska these days are Russians who married and settled there. The settlements have their own leaders, of course, and some of the forts are still at least half-manned by locals, but there really isn't a central authority anymore.

## Settlements

Alaska is dotted with small settlements, most of them little more than a few houses around a trading post. The Inuit have some villages up there, of course—they're used to the cold.

## Sitka

As I said before, Alaska's got a long history—and the settlement of Sitka is almost as long. The Kiksadi Clan of the Tlingit Indians had lived in and around Sitka centuries before the Russians or Americans ever set foot on the island's rocky shores. Choosing the seaward side of the island they named Shee, the Tlingits called their settlement Shee



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Atika, meaning "people on the outside of Shee." The name Sitka is merely a contraction of that.



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The Tlingits lived at Sitka happily and peacefully until 1799, when the Russians arrived. It wasn't long before Alexander Baranof, Manager of the Russian-American Company, established a fort a few miles north of the present-day Sitka. The Tlingits grew immediately hostile, and who can blame them? Submitting to the Russians meant allegiance to the Tsar, but more importantly it meant slave labor to the fur trade company. Baranof did nothing to allay their fears, and the Tlingits finally exploded in 1802, killing not only the Russians but their Aleut slaves. Baranof retaliated, though it took him two years to assemble his forces. Once he did, they battled the Tlingit for six days before driving the Indians from their own settlement. Baranof renamed the place New Archangel and helped the Russian Orthodox Church establish there, setting up fortress-like structures atop a shoreside hill that was later named Castle Hill. Sitka has been a European settlement ever since.

## Gold

Alaska just keeps revealing more treasure, first fur and then oil and then—gold. The first nuggets were found in 1832, in the Kuskokwim River Valley. That was enough to attract prospectors to the area, of course. More gold was found in 1861, on the Stikine River, not far from Telegraph Creek. I'm sure people found some in between those two, but those were both big finds, and well-publicized. Alaska's bound to have more of the yellow metal, too, considering how rich the place is in everything else.

Lately I've heard rumors of ghost rock prospectors going up to Alaska as well. They figure it's bound to be up there, along with everything else, and they want to find it first. You'd think the cold and the snow would deter them, but it hasn't. I guess if you're that determined to trek out into the wilderness and look for gold, you're not going to let a little thing like cold stop you either. And besides, you can pan with nine fingers as easily as you can with ten.

## The Chilkoot Pass

Gold-seekers don't have an easy time of it in Alaska, though. They've got to get supplies up the Yukon River, and the only way to do that if you're not rich is to take the Chilkoot Trail. The 33-mile trail starts at sea level in Dyea, Alaska, 10 miles outside Skagway. It veers briefly through British Columbia, then enters the interior plateau of the Yukon, cutting up through the mountainous Chilkoot Pass and to Bennett Lake. From there you can raft down to the Yukon River. The whole trail takes about a week to navigate, and every second of it is a challenge.

I actually took the damn thing, just to experience it firsthand—it was hearing about the Pass in the first place that made me decide I needed to see more of the North—and I'm never doing it again. Not even for a pan filled with gold.

## A Final Word

So that's the scoop, friends! Who knew that the lands up North were so interesting—or so strange? I know we always thought we had the monopoly on that, down here in the Weird West, but I can honestly say that isn't true any more.







# CHAPTER TWO: MAKIN NORTHERNERS

So you wanna play a Northerner, eh? I don't mean a Yankee. I mean someone who is tough as nails, sturdy as stone—and as cold as the ice around him. What's not to like?

## NEW HINDRANCES & EDGES

People are influenced by their surroundings, they say. And Northerners ain't any different. The North is a cold, severe place, where people live by their wits and their instincts. That calls for certain traits—and means others aren't near as important.

We've got a selection of new Hindrances to gain those extra points you need to make the

perfect character and some new Edges to give your hero a leg up on the competition

## NEW HINDRANCES

Need a few more points to create your own abominable snowman? Read on.

## BLACKFOOT

1

Up North, it's important to know where your neighbors stand—and to let them know where you do. Otherwise you could wind up taking customers you shouldn't, and that can lead to trouble.

Blackfoot is not an Indian term, but an Irish one. The Blackfeet were Irish who were willing to trade and do business with the



Protestant English as well as with other Catholic Irish. That's not a problem, unless you encounter a Whiteboy (see below), but the two factions hate each other violently, and have been known to use arson and even murder against one another.

### COLD BLOODED 2

Yor mama musta been from sunnier climes, 'cause you sure can't handle the cold! It cuts right through you, and sends you shivering to the nearest fire. Old hands like to have fun at your hero's expense by hiding his coat.

Your character can't handle the cold. Take a -1 to all Nimbleness and Quickness-related actions if the temperature is below freezing.

### FINICKY 3

Some people'll eat just about anything and not care. You're not one of 'em.

Maybe you're a city boy, or maybe you've just got digestive problems. Either way, your stomach can't handle "wilderness fare"—you need your food to be properly cleaned and cooked before you can stomach it. Eating ill-prepared food causes your hero 1d6 Wind damage that lasts for 1d4 hours.

### LUMBERIN' 2

People say you're half-ox, and it ain't 'cause you're strong. You just walk like one—slow and heavy.

Stealth isn't your strong suit. You tend to put your feet down when you walk, good and solid. That's fine when you want someone to know you're coming, but it's not so good when going across snow and especially not on ice. Take a -1 to any *Nimbleness* rolls on snow and ice, and a -2 when trying to avoid cracking through thin ice like on a lake.

### SMELLY 2

Some folks just don't smell good. It's not your fault—it's just the way you are.

It's not a question of bathing, really. Your character just has a smell about him—it may not be noticeable to other people, but animals never miss it. And they don't like it one bit. Take a -2 to any *animal handlin'* rolls, and to any *sneak* rolls if animals are nearby.

## UNPOLISHED

1

Some people know how to talk to others, how to navigate city streets, how to bargain and chat and even flirt. You envy them.

You were raised in a small settlement, or just by your parents, and you don't know big cities at all. To you, anything larger than three houses is a big city. Just entering them makes you get all nervous and shakey, and you can't wait to get gone. Take a -1 to all Deftness and Mien rolls while within a city or town.

## WHITEBOY

2

You're Irish, and proud of it—and you don't deal with those who've stood against you.

Whiteboys were Irish who refused to do business of any sort with non-Catholics, and particularly with the English. They also hated the Blackfeet, and attacked them often. Your character cannot do business of any sort with a Protestant, regardless of nationality, or with an Englishman, regardless of religion.

## WIDE-EYED

1

Northerners can usually tell who's from down South, and one o' the ways is by watching their eyes. Southerners ain't used to so much snow and ice, and have a tendency to stare at it—which is a sure way to go blind.

Your character's eyes don't adjust well to all the glare from snow and ice. Take a -1 to all *Cognition* rolls when you're outdoors and surrounded by snow and ice. Each hour in these conditions the hero must make an Onerous (7) *Vigor* roll or become temporarily snow blind for 1d4 hours. Going bust means the condition is permanent.

## MAKIN' NORTHERNERS

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## NEW EDGES

Here are a few new ways to keep your hero ahead of the pack.

## BLOOD BROTHER

2

You've spent time with the Indians, so much that they consider you one of their own.

Not every white man is considered the Indians' enemy. You've been adopted into a tribe, and to them you are family. That also means any tribes they deal with will recognize you as an ally as well. Of course, if you run across your tribes' mortal enemies..

## NATURE'S OWN

3

They say your mama was a bear, and your papa an oak tree. Sometimes it feels like they're right—that's how comfortable you are in the woods.

Some people relate to nature better than others. For you, nature is like your home. You only really feel alive when you're out in the wilderness, away from the buildings and the roads. And when you are, it's like the world welcomes you back. Take +2 to any rolls involving moving through wilderness, such as running through the forest, dodging branches, swimming a river, etc.

## SOFT-FOOTED

2

Any burglar would kill to have your skill at walking.

It isn't that you're particularly small or light, you just know how to walk lightly. You barely leave

footprints, make very little sound when you walk and can move across ice and snow without sinking into them or cracking them.

Take a +2 bonus to *Nimbleness* rolls when crossing ice or snow, and a +1 to *sneak* rolls made on these surfaces as well. This Edge is not available to *brawny* characters.

### STRONG DIGESTION 1

You've heard of people who can't eat certain things or get sick just smellin' them cookin'. That just seems silly to you, though.

It's called an iron stomach by some. You just call it a hardy appetite. Whatever the reason, you can eat almost anything without worrying about it being poisonous or undercooked. That doesn't mean it tastes good, but at least it keeps you going. Ignore any penalties for undercooked food, and any ill effects from plants unless they are deadly poisons.

### UNSCENTED 3

When you were a kid, a blind dog walked right into you—didn't know you were there. It's always been like that.

It isn't that animals like you, necessarily. They just seem to accept you as being there. Dogs never bark at you, horses never whinny—and that one time you ran across a bear, it walked right past you without even snuffling. Take a +2 on *animal handlin'* rolls, and ignore any animal guards when trying to sneak around.

## CREATIN' METIS CHARACTERS

The Metis are an interesting culture. Originally just the offspring of French or British trappers and Indian women, that sense of belonging to two different worlds has set them apart. From that the Metis developed an entire society of their own. They borrow unashamedly from both sides, taking the white man's interest in organization and technology but the Indians' mysticism and respect for the land. The resulting Metis culture is a mix of British, French, and Indian, and probably the best-suited for life in present-day Canada.

For example, the Metis actively use rifles when hunting, but they also use knives, bows, nets, and snares. It's a question of the right tool for the job, and they don't see firearms as contradicting the more traditional tools and weapons. Most Metis favor boots in their settlements, but moccasins when out hunting or trapping. They believe in spirit guides, but at the same time they use modern medicine and devices without fear.

### THE WHITE MAN

In fact, the only reason the Metis haven't dominated Canada completely is that most Europeans look down on them and distrust them. In Manitoba, the Metis are the dominant culture, hold most of the positions in government, and control much of the land. But outside that province they're considered half-breeds, inferior to people of full European descent, and they cannot take government jobs or join the military. Metis beyond Manitoba tend to be

trappers or longhunters, both because of their skills and because they aren't welcomed in most towns or cities.

### THE RED MAN

The Indian reaction to Metis varies as well. Some tribes welcome them as lost relatives and point to the Metis' sense of the spiritual to prove that their Indian blood dominates the taint of the white man. Others see the Metis using modern weapons and tools and say they are white men disguised as Indians—these tribes have nothing to do with the Metis.

Some Indians hate the Metis more than the white man, because they see the Metis as deceivers, pretending to be Indian. The most common reason for this is religion, since almost all Metis are Roman Catholic. Apparently the Metis have reconciled belief in the Holy Trinity with belief in the spirit world by seeing the spirit world as a purgatory, with Heaven beyond that point. To most Indians this is sacrilege.

Obviously, Metis characters usually start in Manitoba. That's where they're strongest, and for campaigns in that province the Metis character has a definite advantage. Playing a Metis in a different province limits what your character can do, where he can go, what jobs he can take, etc. but does make for excellent roleplaying situations.

Metis usually favor their Indian heritage more, in that they have darker skin and dark straight hair. However, many have the light eyes of their European parents, and they can have lighter hair and curls. Most Metis have French last names (like Riel) and French or English first names, though often they have an Indian name as well.

### CREATIN' ACADIAN CHARACTERS

If the Metis are true Canadians because they combine both the original Indian inhabitants and the more recent European settlers, Acadians are true Canadians because they have surrendered themselves to the spirit of the land. The Acadians didn't worry about fitting in with one side or another—they simply settled in Canada, and did what came naturally for them, without worrying about reactions from outsiders. The Acadians are defined by their tie to the land. In some ways they are as spiritual as the Indians or the Metis, but less concerned with naming and binding the spirits. For the Acadians, the land speaks to them through weather and plants. They can respect it most by working with it instead of against it; taking only what they need and trying to give back as much as possible.

For example, many Acadians are farmers, but they farm in the marshlands by reclaiming salt marshes. Canada has a lot of land that's far more fertile, and takes less work to make ready. So why did the Acadians choose the marshes? It just felt right to them, and they didn't mind the extra work. It also was the most beneficial to the land itself—those more fertile areas already had forests or grasslands, which would have needed to be removed before crops could be planted. The marshes don't grow anything, or didn't until the



Acadians reclaimed them. Now those previously-useless marshes grow plants and provide food.

If the Acadians have one dominant trait, it is stubbornness. They do what they think they should and don't care what others say to them. That's cost them in the past—when Britain insisted all French settlers swear allegiance to the British crown and the Anglican church, the Acadians refused and lost their lands because of it. But they didn't back down. It isn't that Acadians are quarrelsome—they don't go looking for fights. They just stick to what they believe, no matter what.

Over the decades, the Acadians have adapted to life in the marshes. That's where they're comfortable, among the trees and the swamps, and every aspect of their life is based around that, from farming to hunting and fishing. Most Acadians don't care much for strangers.

The Acadians are of French stock, and still look it. Most of them are still pale, since the marshes don't get much light, and have calloused hands. Acadian names are usually French in origin, and common last names include: Amirault, Babin, Belliveau, Benoît, Blinn, Boudreau, Briand, Comeau, Deveau, Doucet, Forgeron, Fougère, Gaudet, Girroir, Gerroir, Gerrior, Jeddry, Landry, Levandier, LaLeucher, LeBlanc, Lombard, Maillet, Marchand, Martell, Melanson, Mombourquette, Muise, Poirier, Pothier, Richard, Robichaud, Samson, Saulnier, Thériault, Thibault, Thibodeau, and Thimot.

## NEW EQUIPMENT

If you're heading out into the Canadian wilderness, you'd better be prepared. The nights get downright bitter, and the day's ain't much better—and that's in summer. Canada has a lot of snow and ice, especially in the upper north, so you'll need good cold-weather gear. Here's some of the best, courtesy of the HBC:

**Canoes:** Down south, where it's not as snowy, you'll want one of these instead of a kayak. The Plains Indians use 'em. They're fast and light, and you can fit two or even three people in one. Good for river work.

**Dog sled:** If you need to cross the northern plains, you'll be wantin' a sled. Just hire a good dog team to pull it, put them in the traces, strap in your gear, stand on the back, flick the reins, and you're off! They're faster than a horse on snow and ice, and more sure, too. As an added benefit, the dogs make good guards while you camp.

**Fishing spears:** Clever devils, those Inuit. These spears of theirs are basically harpoons, only lighter and slimmer. See the head, how it swivels? When it hits a fish and drives through, the head turns sideways and catches, so the fish can't get free. And the rope lets you haul in your catch once he's hooked.

**Kayak:** Ah, the perfect northern boat! The Inuits make 'em outta whale bone and skin, so they're naturally sturdy and water-repellent. Only fits one person, but it's light and fast and very maneuverable. They use them to hunt seal with an oar in their hand and a harpoon strapped to their back.

**Parkas:** The Inuit Indians make these things, and you'll never find

a better cold-weather coat. They've got an inner jacket and an outer one, both lined. The outer one is made from caribou fur for warmth. Comes with a built-in hood, to keep your ears from freezin' off.

**Snow Scoop:** This Indian invention is handy when you need to dig out a campsite, or shovel a path from your front door to your outhouse. It's carved from a single piece of split-log, with a long straight handle widening into a rounded blade. The total scoop is four feet in length, and about six inches wide at the edge of the blade. Every winter explorer needs one!

**Snowshoes:** These may look funny, with their big flat surfaces, but strap 'em to your feet and you'll quit laughin'. They let you slide right across snow and ice, faster'n you can walk, and without any danger of crashin' through. Invented by the Cree, they come in two styles. The first has an elliptical frame of willow or chokecherry, made from two pieces. The front end is pointed and turned up, and the frame is lashed together in the rear, extending into a short tail piece. Three wooden crossbars support the netting.

The second type is a single piece of willow bent into an oval frame, with the netting wound around the frame itself—this type gives better purchase, but it's harder to make, and a trifle more expensive. Still, if you've got to cross the ice you'll want the best!

**Trap, Snare:** Most woodsmen make their own, of course, but we're happy to sell it to you anyway. Just set this simple loop on the ground, and bait it with a bit of fruit or meat. When the animal comes along and takes the bait, the snare pulls loose and

## MAKIN' NORTHERNERS 67

grabs 'em by the neck. Easiest thing in the world.

**Trap, Spring:** This beauty is simple as pie to use, and twice as sweet. Just open it flat, set the lever, and lay it down on the ground. You'll probably wanna cover it with some twigs or dirt, just enough to conceal it. Any animal walks across it, the foot hits the lever and snap! They won't be runnin' far with that on them, I tell you what!

## METIS GEAR

Metis can use anything from either the Indians or the Europeans, and do so almost without bias. They use guns as well as bows, axes as well as knives, wear moccasins in the woods but also a Stetson, and buy matches but build canoes.

One thing Metis detest is the destruction of the wilderness, and they actively avoid polluting or desecrating the landscape. Because of this, Manitoba has no factories of any sort—they put out too much smoke and grit. Metis generally prefer hand-stitched clothing and homemade tools, and favor wood and stone over metal unless metal is clearly superior (as it is with weapons). Since that's the case, Metis characters should avoid factory-made items if an equal-quality handmade item is available, and should avoid metal if wood or stone will function as well.

Manitoba has a milder climate, so parkas and other severe cold-weather gear aren't necessary. Metis men usually wear a capote or Red River coat, "culottes

bavaloises" (trousers that open at the hip), big Hudson's Bay Company flannel shirts (usually gray), beaded moccasins, a hat, a beaded pipe bag, the inevitable pipe, leggings, and a sash. The hat is usually of blue cloth or otter or beaver skin, with a black velvet band, elaborate bead work, tassels, ribbons, and embroidery.

**Buckskin Jacket:** These jackets, with their fringes and bead work, are seen all over the West, but they originated with the Metis, and the best ones are still found in Manitoba. The buckskin jacket is one of the largest industries for the Metis, and they have arrangements to sell them through the HBC.

**Capote:** The capote, or "capote crait-rien," is an all-weather coat with a hood. It's usually made from an HBC blanket, and tied around the waist with a sash, to keep a layer of air between the coat and the body.

**Cariole:** This a one-person sleigh, used in winter and pulled by a dog team or horse. The runners and frame are birch wood, usually carved. The sides and front are made of green buffalo hide, scraped clean of hair and dried to resemble thick parchment. The seat is built separately and then fitted in, with fur robes laid over it—the rider slips into it as a hand into a mitten. Carioles tend to be brightly painted, with decorated harnesses and elaborate saddle clothes for the horses or dogs.

**Red River Cart:** This Metis invention took the old cart and modified it for use on buffalo hunts. The Red River cart is made

entirely of wood and its various parts are bound together with wet rawhide, which becomes hard as iron when it dries. The wheels are dish-shaped so their broad rims don't cut deeply into the soil. The cart can be used as a barge, by removing the wheels, attaching them under the axle and box, and encasing everything in buffalo skins so it floats like a raft. The carts are pulled by oxen, one per cart, attached by a harness made from buffalo hide (often in one piece). A Red River cart can carry about one thousand pounds, and covers close to twenty miles in a day. It's also easy to repair, since all of its parts are wood and rawhide. If you're crossing the plains and have more gear than a horse can handle, you'll be wanting a Red River cart.

**Red River Coat:** This and the capote are the standard coats for Metis. The Red River coat is fashioned after the traditional, long, painted hide coat of the Cree and the Northern Ojibwe, but with a European cut, epaulets, and lavish decoration (quillwork, embroidery, painting, and flower bead work) done in highly stylized patterns. It is both decorative and practical, and is often used to identify oneself.

**Sash:** The Metis Sash or Assumption Sash (so-called because it began as a cottage industry in L'Assumption, Quebec) is a staple of Metis clothing. The sash is a finger-woven belt of brightly colored wool and/or plant fibres, approximately three metres (about 12 feet) long. The sash has a variety of uses—in addition to holding a coat closed (as a belt, it's worn wrapped around the waist and tied in the middle, with the fringes hanging down), it can be used as a

tourniquet, a saddle blanket, a towel, a bridle, a scarf, a marker (left on a slain animal, to show possession), a rope, or to lash down a canoe. The fringed ends are often tied to keys or other small valuables, and can be used as an emergency sewing kit. No traveler should be without one!

**York Boat:** This type of boat was invented by a Metis man named Sinclair, and replaced freight canoes as the major transport of the fur trade industry—it can carry more freight, takes fewer men to operate, and is faster on the water. The York boat is roughly forty-two feet (12.6 m) long and can carry six tons (5.4 t) of cargo. It requires 18 men to operate it: a helmsman to give the orders for rowing, a man to steer and sixteen middlemen to pull the oars. Sails are used to catch favorable winds, when possible. The railway is faster, of course, but if you need to get cargo somewhere the railway doesn't go yet, your best bet is the river, and for that you need a York boat.

## ACADIAN GEAR

As mentioned, the Acadians are particularly suited to life in the marshes. They don't deal with outsiders much, which means they don't do much trading—Acadian settlements are completely self-sufficient. Everything is made from wood, since there isn't much stone to be found, or leather or wool. The one thing Acadians will trade for is metal, particularly weapons and tools.

**Kayak:** Perhaps one of the Inuits came this far south, or perhaps an Acadian journeyed up north, or maybe both people had the same idea. Either way, this small, one-person watercraft

looks just like the Inuit kayak except that its skin is much lighter (since the marshes are not as cold). Kayaks are used for scouting, and for hunting or fishing.

**Punt:** this is a small, flat-bottomed boat, ideal for shallow water like the marshes. Punts are handled while standing, and steered using a long pole. Most punts can hold two to three extra people, and tend to be used both for family outings and for supply trips.

**Sabots:** This is a kind of shoe, only it's made of wood (usually willow). The Acadians wear them when working the marshes and when boating, because the wood is waterproof and gives better purchase than their usual moccasins.

**Skiff:** This is similar to a punt, but smaller, and with higher sides and a sharper nose. Skiffs move more quickly than punts, and are more maneuverable. Some have sails, but most are propelled by oars or poles.

**Sleeping Platform:** This is a clever contraption. It's carried like a backpack, with straps to go around each shoulder and then a flat surface made of rope and wooden slats. Once you climb a tree, you take off the platform, unroll it, then turn the four bottom slats sideways so they lock the others into place (they run perpendicular to the rest of the slats, forming two long lines like train tracks). The ropes are used to tie the platform to a branch. Then you can sleep on the platform itself—it's more comfortable than trying to sleep

on the branch. Acadians often climb up high into a tree and tie their platforms across several smaller branches, so they're well out of reach from any bears or alligators.

**Stilt-Shoes:** These are basically boots with long slats lashed to them, so that your feet are supported on small poles. Stilt-shoes vary in height, from five feet to twenty. They're used for collecting fruits and berries from trees, and also for fording marshes—sometimes an Acadian puts on a set of stilt-shoes, walks into the water, and stands there fishing. He's more stable than in a boat, since the shoes are sunk into the mud beneath him, and high enough that alligators can't get him. The slats are usually still covered in bark; apparently alligators assume they're trees and just pass them by.

**Tree-rig:** This consists of a braided rope, a set of boots, and a set of kneepads. The boots and kneepads have sharp teeth (usually alligator), the boots on the bottom and side and the kneepads in front and along the inside edge. The braided rope also has teeth in the middle. Acadians use these rigs to scale trees—they hold the rope in both hands, around the tree, raise it as high as they can, then pull themselves up to it by gripping the tree between their legs. The teeth help them hold on, by digging into the bark. An Acadian with one of these rigs can scale a hundred-foot tree in just a few minutes, and without even breathing hard.

## A NOTE ABOUT MONEY

The Canadians have their own money, though they also use cents and dollars to sort it out. They've got coins worth one cent, five cents, ten cents, twenty-five cents, and fifty cents. Everything else is in paper notes, or bills—the \$1 bill, the \$5 bill, the \$10 dollar bill, and the \$20 dollar bill. The only other thing you're liable to run across is the shinplaster—that's a 25-cent note printed in 1870, when they temporarily ran out of coins. Canadians accept U. S. gold eagles, and value them at 10 dollars Canadian, but they won't take silver coins from the U. S., or any paper. Generally speaking, a Canadian dollar's worth about the same as a Union one—that is, something that costs 10 Union dollars probably costs 10 Canadian dollars up there.

## EQUIPMENT PRICES

Item	Price
Buckskin Jacket	\$30
Canoe	\$35
Capote	\$20
Cariole	\$75
Dog sled	\$50
Fishing spear	\$10
Kayak	\$40
Parka	\$30
Punt	\$20
Red River cart	\$100
Red River coat	\$35
Sabots	\$2
Sash	\$15
Skiff	\$25
Sleeping Platform	\$3.50
Snow scoop	\$1
Snow shoes	\$5
Stilt shoes	\$10
Trap, snare	\$0.50
Trap, spring	\$3.50
Tree Rig	\$15
York boat	\$300

# BRITISH SOLDIER

## TRAITS AND APTITUDES

### Deftness 2d12

Shootin': rifle 4  
Speed load: rifle 2

### Nimbleness 4d10

Climbin' 1  
Dodge 2  
Fightin': brawlin', knife 2  
Horse ridin' 2  
Sneak 1

### Quickness 3d8

### Strength 2d10

### Vigor 1d8

### Cognition 4d6

Scrutinize 1  
Search 1  
Trackin' 1

### Knowledge 1d6

Area  
knowledge:  
Any 2  
Language:  
English 2  
Language:  
Indian sign 1

### Mien 3d6

### Smarts 2d6

Ridicule 1  
Survival: any 2

### Spirit 3d6

Guts 2

### Edges:

Brave 2  
Light Sleeper 1

### Hindrances:

Intolerance -2 (French)  
Loyal -3  
Obligation -3

**Gear:** Martini-Henry rifle,  
30 rounds of  
ammunition, knife, horse  
\$75 (saved pay)

## PERSONALITY

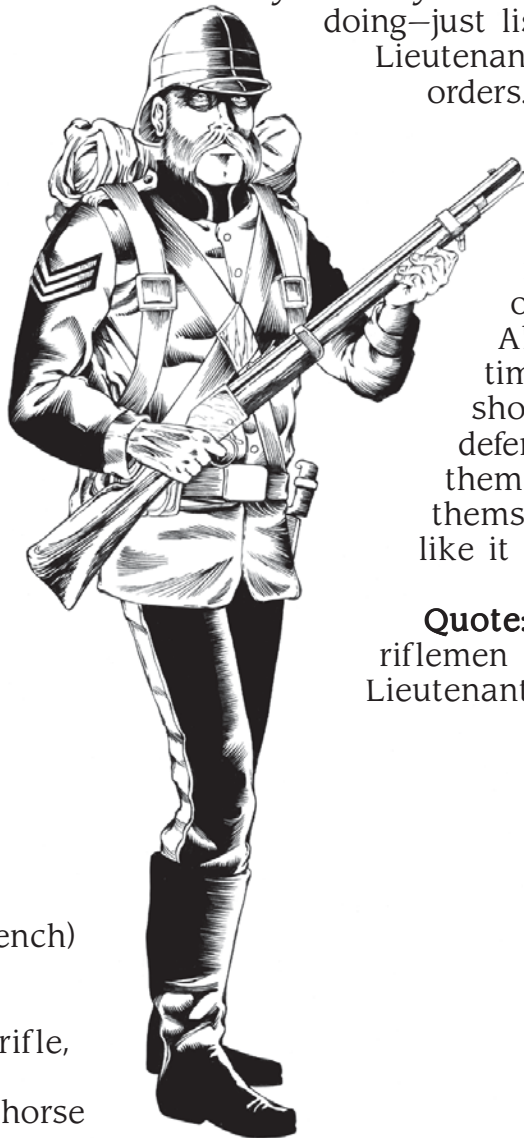
Can't say I much like it on this continent. The roads are unpaved, the people unwashed, and the food barely fit for dogs. But that's the job, in'tit? Go where the Crown sends us, and mop up as best we can. At least the pay's steady, and you always know what you're doing—just listen to the

Lieutenant, and follow orders. Simple enough.

I've heard talk, too, that these Canucks are finally forming their own militia.

About bloody time, I say. Why should we have to defend them? Let them protect themselves if they like it here so much.

**Quote:** "Sir, yes sir, riflemen ready to march, Lieutenant, Sir!"



# LONGHUNTER

## TRAITS AND ABILITIES

### Deftness 2d8

Shootin': rifle 3

### Nimbleness 4d10

Climbin' 1

Fightin': brawlin' 2, knife 2

Ridin' 2

Sneak 3

Swimmin' 1

### Quickness 3d6

### Strength 2d8

### Vigor 3d10

### Cognition 4d12

Search 2

Trackin' 4

### Knowledge 3d6

Area knowledge 2

Native tongue 2

Language: Indian  
sign 1

### Mien 2d6

### Smarts 2d6

Survival:  
wilderness 3

### Spirit 3d6

Guts 2

### Edges:

Eagle Eyes 1

Nature's Own 3

Strong Digestion 1

Unscented 3

### Hindrances:

Stubborn -3

Superstitious -3

Unpolished -1

**Gear:** two rifles, two  
boxes of ammo, knife,  
horse or dog sled, bed  
roll, parka

## PERSONALITY

Well, howdy, Mabel! Glad t'see me?

I know it's been a month this time—damn caribou shifted trails, and I had to tail 'em all the way to the hills. But I got 'em. I

always do. The meat an' furs went to the HBC, as usual,

but the horns I'm saving—Indians pay well for those, so's they can carve 'em.

Meantime, I haven't had a bed in a month, or a shave, or a decently cooked meal. And as for a woman—but you know that. So get me some-at to eat 'n drink, willya?

And after I'm done, we'll head upstairs. I've missed you.

### Quote: "Sshh!

Animals hear better 'n you do, fool. And if'n you scare 'em off, we'll have another week just finding a new pack.

Now get that rifle ready!"



# MOUNTY

## TRAITS AND APTITUDES

### Deftness 2d12

Shootin': pistol, rifle 3

### Nimbleness 3d6

Climbin' 2

Dodge 1

Fightin': brawlin', knife 2

Horse ridin' 2

### Quickness 3d10

Quick draw 2

### Strength 4d6

### Vigor 3d8

### Cognition 4d6

Scrutinize 2

Search 2

Trackin' 2

### Knowledge 1d6

Area knowledge 2

Language: English

2

Language: Indian

sign 2

### Mien 3d8

Leadership 2

Overawe 3

Persuasion 2

### Smarts 2d6

Survival: any 2

### Spirit 3d6

Guts 2

### Edges:

Blood Brother 3

Law man 5

Veteran o' the Weird

West 0 (Don't forget to

have your Marshal

draw for you.)

### Hindrances:

Big britches -3

Heroic -3

Law o' the West -3

Obligation -3

**Gear:** two pistols, one rifle, one knife, Mounty uniform, horse, bed roll, saddlebags

## PERSONALITY

Canada's a beautiful country, and that's the truth. Most of it's still unspoiled by settlers, just wilderness the way God made it. But people're coming, more and more all the time. Where towns and villages grow up, there's crime, and greed, and

dangers. That's why we're here. Round these parts,

we're the law—police, judge, and army, all

rolled into one. If

you're honest and need help, we'll be there for

you, whether you're needing someone to

repair your wagon wheel or to protect

you from thieves. But if you're here to cause

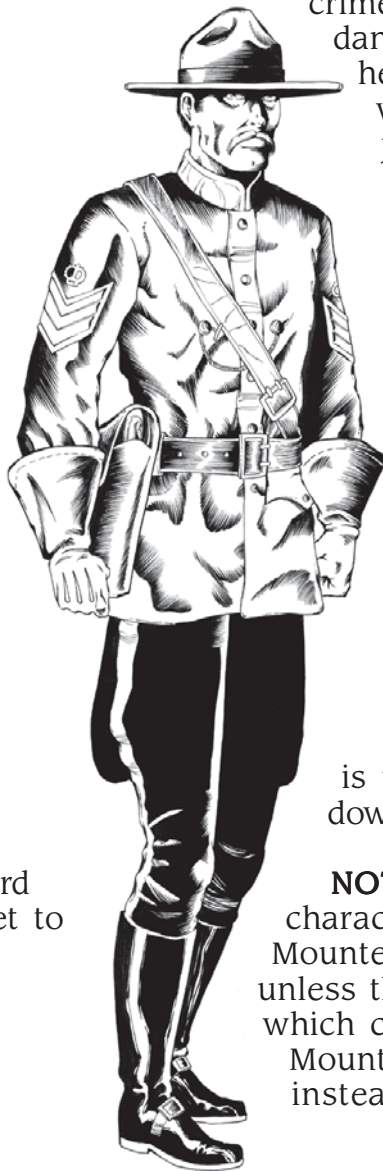
trouble, to steal and murder and defile—

well, you'd best be leaving now. Because

you won't get that chance again.

**Quote:** "Halt, you! This is the Mounties! Stand down, or be judged!"

**NOTE:** Starting player-characters can only be Mounted Police Constables, unless they take Rank 1, in which case they can be Mounted Police Corporals instead.





# TRAPPER

## TRAITS AND ABILITIES

### Deftness 2d8

Shootin': rifle 2

### Nimbleness 4d10

Climbin' 3

Fightin': brawlin', knife 2

Sneak 3

Swimmin' 1

Teamster 2

### Quickness 3d6

### Strength 2d6

### Vigor 3d10

### Cognition 4d12

Search 2

Trackin' 4

### Knowledge 3d6

Area knowledge:

Any 2

Language: French

2

Language: Indian

sign 1

### Mien 2d6

Animal Wranglin' 1

### Smarts 2d6

Survival: wilderness

3

### Spirit 3d8

Guts 2

### Edges:

Nature's Own 3

Strong Digestion 1

Unscented 3

### Hindrances:

Stubborn -3

Superstitious -3

Unpolished -1

**Gear:** spring traps,  
snare traps,  
snowshoes, parka,  
rifle, box of ammo,  
knife, dog sled (with  
dog team)

## PERSONALITY

Do I carry a gun? Of course—what am I, stupid? But I don't like to use it. Not even on animals—it ruins the furs. Longhunters, they don't get that—stupid, the lot of 'em, chasing after animals and putting holes in 'em. Not me. I can get the beasties without a

bullet, thanks all the same. It takes patience, of course, and knowing how they think, but it can be done, if you're smart 'n careful. You just gotta know where they go, and why, and then figger out how to get 'em. See this coat? Made it myself, couple 'a years back. Caught every one 'a these myself, too. No gun needed.

**Quote:** "See those tracks? That's bear for sure. Too big to trap, and too ornery. Now those are fox prints—good fur. They've got a warren nearby, and that's where we'll take 'em. Come on."



# THE MARSHAL'S HANDBOOK







# CHAPTER THREE:

## SECRETS OF

## THE NORTH

Okay, time to get the lowdown on the Dominion of Canada. Are you ready?

### GOVERNMENT COVER-UPS

Canada's got a lot of problems, but it's also dodged some bullets. For example, back in '73 Mackenzie and the rest of the Liberal Party started what became the Pacific Scandal—they accused the Prime Minister, John A. Macdonald, of taking bribes from Canada Pacific to award them the contract for the national railway. Nothing came of it, and the charges were dropped—Mackenzie claimed it had just been an honest attempt to find the truth, apologized, and that was that. Right?

Wrong.

First of all, the charges were dead-on—Macdonald had accepted moneys from Canada Pacific. So why didn't the investigators find anything? Apparently, Macdonald has friends in high and low places. Including one Louis Riel, lieutenant governor of the Province of Manitoba. Macdonald contacted Riel, and suddenly all evidence against him vanished. Mackenzie even had some witnesses, people who'd ferried the money on occasion, but now they couldn't remember doing that. So Macdonald was cleared, the railway was built, and Canada kept on growing.

Only now Macdonald owes Riel a major debt. And Riel is looking

to collect. What does he want? Nothing less than favored status for the Metis by the federal government. That would give Metis citizens preferential treatment in jobs, loans, grants, legal disputes—pretty much everything.

Riel wants his people free to move outside their own province, and if Macdonald pushes through the bill, the Metis will get that and more. And Riel? If his people get favored status, and expand throughout the Dominion, he may set his sights a bit higher than lieutenant governor—more like Prime Minister.

Not that Macdonald's the type to give up easily. He's a powerful man, and used to getting his way—by whatever means necessary. He wanted all of the coastal colonies to join the Dominion, for example—and he got it. True, Newfoundland and Prince Edward Island both wavered, but they did eventually join. The deciding factor for both of them was practical rather than political. Both colonies were scared by recent events in their

area, and wanted to be part of a larger, more protective organization. The Fenians had a little something to do with that, with their raids, but stranger things were happening as well, things people couldn't explain or fight off. It all worked out perfectly.

Perhaps a little too perfectly.

Macdonald would never admit to it, of course, but some of those problems were of his own doing. As already mentioned, he has friends at all levels, and some of them are less savory than others. Macdonald "encouraged" a few of those who associated with questionable company to move to Newfoundland and PEI, and voilà! Instant apprehension.

Of course, now he owes those folks favors as well, and he's done his best to keep the military and the Mounties away from them. But as people become more nervous and more scared, their demands for help get louder, and Macdonald can't stall much longer. He's going to have to make a choice, and hope it doesn't blow up in his face.



## RAILWAY TIES

Canada Pacific was awarded the contract for Canada's cross-country railway in 1871, the same year British Columbia became a province. They had the entire thing finished five years later! Down in the Union and the Confederacy, the Rail Wars are still in full swing, and no one expects to be finished that quickly. So how did CP manage it?

Well, on the one hand, they cheated a little. Canada already had several smaller railways, and since the government owns the rail systems CP was able to tie new tracks into the existing ones. That helped a little.

Then they have teams working around the clock, so that the track is never static. Plus, since they already own the contract, no one's competing with them. That means CP can put all its efforts into building, and not worry about security—or about eliminating rivals.

Those factors still don't explain how they could build that large a rail system in so short a time, though. Something more had to be working in their favor. And it was.

What most people don't know is that CP is a syndicate, an organization formed by several other companies. And the company with the most shares, and therefore largely in control, is—the Hudson Bay Company.

That's right, HBC is building the railroad. And since part of the contract with the government states that CP gets to ride and ship cargo for half-price, HBC basically has a monopoly on train shipping. No one else can come close to their prices, because they can charge less and still make a profit.

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## HELPING HAND

In order to get that contract, though, CP had to guarantee it could have the railway completed on time. To make sure it could fulfill that promise, the HBC got a little help from a friend—a certain well-known British expatriate living in the northern part of the Union.

One Dr. Darius Hellstromme.

Hellstromme initially wanted the contract himself, of course, and offered to have Wasatch Railroad build it in return for free access. But the directors of the HBC aren't stupid, and they stuck to their guns. Besides, someone might notice if Wasatch turned up to do the work instead of Canada Pacific, and then the entire contract might be tossed out.

Hellstromme finally settled for a better trade agreement with the HBC and the opportunity to test out some of his new inventions in the field. He'd create new devices for railroad work and then send them up to be tested on a remote part of the railway where no one would notice. Then he'd refine the device and use it for Wasatch.

The only problem with the HBC's deal is that Hellstromme always plans ahead. If he winds up winning the Rail War in the Union, HBC may find that its tracks all link up perfectly with the Wasatch Railroad's—whether they want to or not. If you think it's a mere coincidence that the same man who built the railroad also created the Winterline—and put the two side-by-side—think again.

## INDIAN NATIONS

The Sioux Nation has been making overtures to its northern cousins, in the hopes of expanding—if it can get the Canadian tribes, particularly the Plains Indians, to join, it can push right up into Canada. Its territory would then overlap the Transcontinental Railway, allowing the Sioux to charge tolls for every train crossing their lands.

## THE CREE CONFEDERACY

Unfortunately for the Sioux, things aren't working out that way. The Cree are the dominant tribe in Canada, and they have no intention of sharing with some Southern kin who got uppity. So a few years back the Cree formed their own nation, the Cree Confederacy. They already had strong alliances with several other Plains tribes, particularly the Ojibway and the Assiniboine, and they're actively courting others.

Now, the Cree could have just announced themselves as a sovereign nation and been done with it, but they're not dumb—they knew Canada might take offense, and it's not wise to piss off a big and powerful neighbor who surrounds you on all sides. So instead, they've petitioned the Dominion for acceptance as a province. If Parliament approves, they'll be officially recognized, and granted all the benefits of a full province, including the right to their own local government and control over their own language, religion, and education. It's definitely a smart move on

their part, and they have the support of everyone who believes the Indians should control their own destiny—including Louis Riel, who has already set the precedent with Manitoba and the Metis.

The Cree aren't exactly home-free, however. Some government officials feel the Indians should be integrated, rather than segregated (even if the segregation is by their own choice), and are opposing the Confederacy petition.

And then there's the Blackfoot. This rival tribe has formed its own Blackfoot Confederacy, which consists of its three tribes (Blackfoot, Blood, and Peigan) and anyone else they can bully into joining. This group is loudly declaring itself to be the new Indian nation for Canada. The Blackfoot and the Cree have been enemies for centuries, so there's little chance of the two combining forces, or even declaring a truce.

The Cree Confederacy is larger, and has more tribes, plus it's got more support from outside, but the Blackfoot are more vicious, and more ruthless. Lately, the Blackfoot leaders have been talking to the Sioux. They don't particularly like one another, but if the Blackfoot have to bow to anyone they'd prefer Sioux to Cree. It's looking like there may be an Indian War out on the Canadian Plains, and that could get very ugly very quickly.

## ETERNAL WINTER

Few things are as dangerous as a shaman scorned. Raven—yes, the same crazed shaman who started the Reckoning in the first place—is behind the Sioux Nations. He's the one who suggested that they approach

their northern neighbors, and invite them to join. But of course the Cree weren't having any of that. After several rounds of talks and several failed approaches, Raven finally admitted that he wasn't going to get his way—at least not by normal means.

## THE HOWLERS

So what did he do? Raven summoned forth a trio of manitou known as the Howlers—these monsters are basically sentient ice storms. Then he set them loose on the Dominion. The Howlers swept across Canada, causing winter by their very touch. Their hold on the country grew so strong, reinforced by the fear of its inhabitants, that they froze weather itself, fixing the entire country in permanent winter. Until Hellstromme arrived with his Winterline.

Does that short, ghost-rock-powered fence really have the ability to hold back winter? Of course not. Hellstromme thinks so, but the Howlers could breach the Winterline at any time. It might weaken them a bit, but they'd survive the crossing intact.

## SPIRITUAL AID

So what is holding them back? Well, it didn't take the Cree long to figure out what had happened when winter refused to leave. They don't deal with manitou themselves—that's a dark art, and forbidden to them—but the Cree do have pacts with several powerful nature spirits. They summoned these spirits, and asked them to drive the manitou from their land.

And the spirits said no.

Not that they weren't willing—nature spirits hate manitou, who are unnatural creations and warp

the natural order by their presence. But the Howlers are powerful foes, and the summoned spirits lacked the strength to vanquish them completely. They did agree to hold the Howlers back, however, and thus to shield at least part of the country from their icy grasp. So these nature spirits are actually responsible for staving off the Ice Age, not Hellstromme's creation.

Does his fence serve any purpose, then? Actually, yes. The nature spirits had to chase the Howlers down, initially, and that can be tiring, especially when the manitou can vanish and reappear miles away. But Hellstromme's fence annoyed them enough to make them scream, a sound only those in the spirit world can hear. The nature spirits discovered that they could pinpoint this sound and reach the spot in time to turn the Howler back.

So Hellstromme's pride and joy is really an alarm system, nothing more. The Howlers are fleeing from the nature spirits who patrol the fence, not from the fence itself.

## MANITOBA

Why is all of Manitoba protected? Riel is a powerful shaman himself, and has other Metis shaman working with him. They summoned up their own nature spirits to guard their borders—because it's a smaller space, the spirits are more effective, and can keep the Howlers out completely.

Any shaman or huckster can sense the warning the fence sounds at the approach of a



Howler. This requires a Fair (5) *Spirit* check (Wisdom check (DC10). If successful, the character hears a high-pitched whine, like a cross between machinery and a sharp wind. It grows louder as the Howler comes closer.

## FOREIGN POWERS

As if the threat of an internal war wasn't enough, some people are trying to start an external one. The French reclaimed Mexico not long ago, and now they've set their sights on Canada. If they can take even just the southern portion, they could squeeze the Union between the two and, at the very least, wring out some concessions. Of course, the French don't stand much chance of taking the Dominion as a whole, so they're starting in the only place they can—Quebec.

For the last year, French spies have been living in Quebec, posing as locals. These people have begun loudly decrying the Dominion, saying Quebecois are being treated as inferior because they're good French-speaking Catholics. If that was a lie, it'd be easy to ignore, but it's not.

Most of Canada is English-speaking and Protestant, so the Quebecois are slighted outside their province. They've known that for years, of course, but it's getting worse, especially as the Dominion becomes more organized and more solidly British in attitude. With these rabble-rousers around, people are beginning to get riled up. If something doesn't change soon, Quebec might riot against British rule. With France

surreptitiously sending in troops for support, they'll hold off the Canadian militia. The next step, of course, would be to do the same thing in Manitoba (although if Riel gets his "favored status" bill, that won't happen—he won't have any reason to buck the system then), and then spread out from there, rousing the French in each area or simply invading where necessary.

## THE FENIAN BROTHERHOOD

The Fenian Brotherhood has stepped up its attacks over the last ten years, particularly along the border between Canada and the Union. That's because there's been a change in leadership.

The Brotherhood is actually controlled from New York and has both an elected president and an elected senate. For years the Brotherhood was run by a man named John O'Mahoney, who was known as the "Head Centre." But in '65 a dispute started about funding, and the Brotherhood split into two factions: O'Mahoney's group, and a second faction backed by the senate and run by William Randall Roberts. Roberts is more politically aggressive than O'Mahoney, and more interested in political and financial leverage than military might or violence. Too bad he's not the one in charge up in the Dominion.

In Canada, the Brotherhood works through the Hibernian Brotherhood Society of Canada, founded in 1858 by an influential tavern keeper named Michael Murphy. Murphy was born in Cork, Ireland, in 1826, and moved to York (now Toronto) when he was boy. The Hibernian Brotherhood provides a public face for the Fenians and Murphy is an avid supporter of O'Mahoney.

In 1866 Murphy was arrested and charged with treason, but he escaped from prison and disappeared. In fact, Murphy did escape, but was badly injured in doing so—so badly that he died a few months later. He came back Harrowed a few months after that.

Murphy is back in charge of the Hibernians, and has severed ties with the Fenians and their new nonviolent policies. He claims to be following O'Mahoney's lead, but hasn't actually been in contact with the faction leader for years. Instead, Murphy now uses the Fenians to generate more terror across Canada, terror to feed back into the Reckoners.

For the last few years, Murphy's been building two units: the Banshees and the Firbolgs. The Banshees are an assassination squad; Murphy uses them to take out political and religious leaders. Their first target was Thomas D'Arcy, an MP and one of the Fathers of Confederation. They shot him as he stepped into his home in Ottawa. They've killed several more since, each time picking a target for maximum public effect.

But the Firbolgs are worse. They're all former Fenians, and all combat-trained—and they're all Harrowed. Right now Murphy only has twenty of them, but he's looking for more. His goal is to build a small army and then unleash them on the government.

The rumors about the Union helping the Fenians is untrue, of course, but Murphy does have an ally. William Bernard O'Donogue moved to New York as a boy, and was a teacher and a Fenian sympathizer. In 1869 he headed to Canada to take part in the Metis protest, and he was present for the trial and execution of Thomas Scott.

O'Donogue tried bullying Riel for a position with the new Metis government and was expelled for his troubles. He turned to the Fenians for aid and they give him a small force to lead back across the border, with John O'Neill and JJ Donnelly. O'Donogue's men were captured and sent back to the States to be arrested, but he escaped. He's recently joined up with Murphy, and confided in him what happened with Thomas Scott. Murphy is trying to blackmail Riel with the information—thus far the Metis leader has spurned him, but he may not last much longer. If the Fenians form an alliance with the Metis, even one of nonaggression, they can establish a base in Manitoba and begin to attack the rest of the Dominion from there.

## RELIGIOUS ISSUES

Politics isn't the only realm of contention in Canada. The fact that the Dominion is divided between two major religions—Roman Catholic and Anglican—makes for a great deal of tension. Each of the churches has its own issues as well.

### THE ROMAN CATHOLICS

The Roman Catholic Church in Canada is definitely the underdog—it's present in every province, but really only has power in Quebec and Manitoba. That's simply not enough. For the last twenty years it's been founding new religious orders, like the Clerics of St. Viator and the Fathers of the Holy Cross, both from Montreal.

By doing so, the Church has increased the number of zealots in Canada and created a network of small organizations all answering back to the Church—much the same way a terrorist organization might work. Certainly, each of these orders is proselytizing, but they haven't shown any tendencies towards violence—yet.

The orders stress physical well-being as well as spiritual salvation and they could easily become paramilitary units if the orders were given. The Church is also actively working to consolidate its hold over Quebec and Manitoba, partially by remaining integral to communities in each province, but also by blocking attempts to establish other religions there. Anglican and Protestant missions have encountered vandalism and even arson in both provinces. While no one is accusing the Church of these crimes, it is at least condoning them.

### THE ANGLICANS

The Anglican Church has its own problems right now. It controls most of Canada, but the recent “churchmanship” debates have split its focus, and sapped its attention. The church party and the episcopal party are actively attacking one another and the accusations are growing both louder and more vile. Already a few debates have turned into scuffles—and the threat of real violence is increasing. This is mainly in large towns and cities, where both parties have members—smaller towns tend to follow one or the other.

### THE BORDER REGION

The Border Region is famous for its lakes and small islands. But there's a lot more than just scenery around these parts.

### THE HURON

First of all, the area is claimed by the Huron tribe. Wait, you're thinking—didn't they get wiped out by the Iroquois in 1648? Not quite. The Iroquois did their best, but they didn't count on the ingenuity—or desperation—of the Huron shamans. When only a few families remained, the Huron gathered together and ripped open a hole to the Hunting Grounds. Everyone passed through, and once they were inside the shamans sealed it shut.

Fortunately for the Huron, the Old Ones were still present at this time, and thus the compact between the Old Ones and the Manitou was still in place. The evil spirits could not touch or harm the Huron in any way.

But the nature spirits could. While they were generally friendly towards mankind, they didn't much care for having their own homes invaded. The Huron shamans performed rites to appease them and finally struck a bargain—the nature spirits would allow them to live in the Hunting Grounds until it was safe to return to the material world. In return, the Huron would allow the nature spirits to possess them three times a year, provided the spirits did not deliberately harm their hosts. It was a terrible price to pay, but far better than extinction, and the Huron agreed.

The surviving tribesmen remained hidden in the Hunting Grounds for over a hundred years before the spirits told them that it was safe to go and that they were

needed. A new portal was opened, and the Huron stepped foot back into the material world in 1763, just outside Fort Detroit—and found themselves being attacked.

The attackers were Ottawa, led by their crazed chieftain Pontiac. They had already slaughtered the British in every other fort on the Great Lakes. For some reason of their own, the nature spirits did not wish to see the Ottawa succeed and they sent the Huron to oppose them. The battle was short. The Huron had been fighting mock battles throughout their exile to keep fit, and they were well-rested, while the Ottawa were tired from several weeks of hard riding and fighting. The Huron drove the Ottowans back and the fort was untouched. Because the battle took place at night, and the nature spirits had created a thick fog, the British soldiers never knew what had saved them.

Since that time, the Huron have flourished, growing more numerous again and taking full possession of the Border Region. Other Indians give them a wide berth. Three times a year, as promised, the Huron braves let themselves be possessed by nature spirits and carry out their bidding. Generally this involves stopping those who would desecrate the land and driving back invaders.

The Huron reside in the Thousand Islands. Normally they live in the wooded areas, safely hidden among the trees. But when the spirits possess them, the braves live apart from their tribe, residing within the ruined hotels left behind by Europeans. These are the strange lights travelers have seen.

The possessed braves often leave the Thousand Islands on their otherworldly missions. They use the Manitoulin Islands for

their traveling camps. This is why people have disappeared from Lake Huron—the nature spirits do not wish to be disturbed, or to have their actions spied upon. British troops have tried patrolling the lake and the islands, to protect travelers there, but the spirits use fog, wind, and rain to keep the soldiers at bay. They only take lives when necessary, preferring to scare away travelers or render them unconscious and transport them to a new location.

## MARITIME PROVINCES

The Maritimes are relatively quiet—at least, they were until the Confederation process began. Prince Edward Island made the mistake of hesitating about joining the Dominion, and Macdonald decided that perhaps PEI needed a little more incentive. So he encouraged some acquaintances to move there. The real question isn't why he did it—he probably thought it was for the colony's own good, and certainly for the good of the future Dominion. No, the real question is—where did a man like John Macdonald make the acquaintance of the Matlose? (See page 119.) And how did he not only keep them from killing him, but get them to do his bidding?

However he managed it, the fearsome creatures did relocate to Prince Edward Island, where they began terrorizing the locals. It was this sudden wave of terror and destruction that led the Islanders to finally approve the proposal to join the Dominion.

Unfortunately, Macdonald doesn't really control the Matlose, and they've come to like their new home. The Prime Minister has tried calling them off several times, but they've ignored him. The few troops he's sent in have been slaughtered. Now the Islanders are going from frightened to angry—they joined the Dominion for protection, and it hasn't provided any. They want some help, and they want it now—and they no longer care where that help comes from.

### OAK ISLAND

Oak Island is another hot spot in the Maritimes, of course. The Money Pit really does hold treasure—but not the kind that comes in coins. It's actually a portal to the Hunting Grounds, and the resting place of several powerful Indian relics. So powerful they hid the relics away, and created a pact with nature spirits to protect them. A water spirit and an earth spirit guard the site, and shift water and dirt to prevent anyone from reaching the relics themselves. That's enough to stop most treasure-seekers. Unfortunately, the activity has drawn the attention of Raven and the Last Sons, who've noticed the mystical energies surrounding the island. Several of them are examining the area; if they get their hands on those relics they'll be more powerful than ever.

Fortunately, the Last Sons have some competition. The Maritimes are the home of the Micmac Indians, and it was their ancient

burial ground where the Old Ones stepped into the Hunting Grounds—and where Raven led the Last Sons through to destroy the Old Ones and cause the Reckoning. The Micmac are filled with guilt over this, which is why they now avoid contact with most other people—they feel responsible for what happened, as if they could have prevented it. Recently, some of the Micmac have decided that guilt isn't enough. They want to atone for the past by protecting the future, making sure such a disaster never happens again. To that end, they have formed the Guardians, a band of warriors and shamans.

The Guardians patrol the gateways between this world and the Hunting Grounds, making sure such sites are securely closed and properly protected. For now, they've only covered the Maritimes, but they are expanding, both in membership and in area. Oak Island is one of their top priorities, since it is both a portal and a reliquary; if the Last Sons do try anything the Guardians will be there to stop them. The only problem is a mystical battle of that scale could awaken other forces around the world and might cause more trouble than it prevents.

### ACADIA

The Acadians get along with the Indian tribes better than almost any other Europeans—the Indians see in them an equal love of the land, and respect for its sanctity. Because of this, the Acadians never have to worry about attacks from the Indians. It's other Europeans who concern them.

Lately, the Acadians have been approached by emissaries from France. France is interested in reclaiming its old provinces, and

wants the aid of its former citizens to do so. The Acadians would be perfect for this—they know the land better than anyone, they don't draw too much attention in small towns, and they can move through Indian territory unmolested. The only problem is, the Acadians aren't interested. It's not that they love the British—far from it, many families still remember Le Grand Dérangement. But they're happy in their marshes, and they don't want to do anything that might get them in trouble. If the French want to invade, that's fine—the Acadians won't try to stop them—but they have no interest in fighting the British either.

The French aren't too happy with this attitude. They'd expected more active support, and they can't afford the possibility that the Acadians might have a change of heart and ally with the British. So the emissaries have gotten a bit more aggressive, and their message has become more clear: Join us, or leave.

The Acadians are still debating what to do. Some of them feel it's better to work with the French than to be exiled again. They are French, after all. But others say it isn't their war, and they shouldn't let themselves be dragged into it. Besides, some of their kin relocated years ago, and seem perfectly happy in their new home.

That's why the Acadians have sent a handful of men south, to Louisiana. They're to find their kin, the Cajuns, and talk to them about the situation. If things look good down there, and the Cajuns are willing, the Acadians might decide to relocate en masse. Just clear out of the marshes altogether, and leave them for whomever wants them. But if their cousins can't accommodate them, the Acadians may decide to hole up against any attackers.

## NEWFOUNDLAND

Newfoundland has a problem.

Like Prince Edward Island, it wavered about joining the Dominion, and like PEI it got some sudden incentive when strange things started happening, courtesy of John Macdonald. But the Matlose aren't the issue—most of them have been killed off.

It's what killed them that's a problem.

The Beothuk didn't all die. The last surviving member, before she died in 1829, had a son. He was already in his thirties when Raven appeared, but he joined the vengeful shaman at once, eager to avenge the death of his people. In 1863, after murdering the Old Ones in the Hunting Grounds, this Last Son returned to his homeland, and began preparing. It took him five years to ready the rites and perform them properly, but finally he was done, and the Beothuk began to rise again. Literally.

That's what's terrifying Newfoundland these days. Not Matlose, but Indians. Dead ones. People have reported sightings of skeletal and decaying Indians stalking people. The bodies seem to be speaking, but no one can understand their words, for their mouths are as decayed as the rest, and their minds are mostly gone from those long years in the earth. But the Indians are clearly angry; their visitations have become more frequent in the last ten years, and more violent.

Most of the Beothuk died from diseases like tuberculosis. The Last Son's magics have altered

those illnesses, transforming them into magical ailments that cause madness and deformity. Everyone who's seen one of these walking corpses has been afflicted. Thus far, no one has found a cure. Macdonald, thinking that his Matlose are still the cause of all the complaints and cries, has been stalling on any real help. As with PEI, Newfoundland is getting desperate, and would probably accept help from any quarter.

To make matters worse, the Mockbeggars are growing louder. This area in Bonavista Bay (along the east coast of Newfoundland) is the home of a group of strange coffins, found just a year or two ago. The coffins are made of wood (including their joints and pegs), of a type not native to Newfoundland, and the bodies within are of men, women, and children, all dressed in unfamiliar clothing. The coffins were all buried in the mud and houses had been built over several of them.

Ever since finding the coffins, Mockbeggar has heard singing on windy nights. The songs are in a foreign language, and send chills down the spine of the listener. Recently the songs have grown louder, until people can no longer sleep and have to stuff cotton in their ears to keep from going mad. This isn't the Beothuk, or even the Matlose. It's something different, possibly older, but equally frightening.

Then there's the ghost rock. A vein was found in Newfoundland last year, and another in Labrador this year. The miners contacted the government, and were immediately paid handsomely

and relocated. No one has seen them since. The government is keeping the discoveries very quiet. After all, every nation in the world wants ghost rock, and most are willing to do almost anything to get it.

If the Dominion can mine these two veins quickly, they can build a small stockpile of the valuable mineral without having to fend off would-be partners—or conquerors. The Union is their biggest concern, since Newfoundland is close enough to be invaded easily, but Britain or France might also decide to claim the islands for themselves, and the Dominion can't afford a war right now. With a few months, however, to extract the ghost rock and use it for new devices, the Dominion could suddenly become a good deal more formidable—certainly strong enough to defend itself, and perhaps even powerful enough to claim a bit more territory along its southern border.

## QUEBEC

Quebec's biggest problem right now is France. That foreign power is determined to reclaim its former colonies, and has chosen Quebec as the logical place to start. Its spies and infiltrators are all over the province, encouraging talk about British partiality towards the English-speakers and stirring up old religious and cultural hostilities.

The French have found an ally in the Catholic Church, which also wants more control over the Dominion. Not that everyone in the Church is willing to cause a war, but enough Catholic priests have joined the French cause that they've established a solid network throughout Quebec proper, and even into a few of the other provinces.

## QUEBEC CITY

Quebec City has been suffering lately, as a wave of fires has devastated it. The fires seem to start only at night, and usually in the warehouse district of Lower Town, but they grow rapidly and move from the business area to the residential section, destroying whole city blocks at a time. Fire brigades have been formed, but so far they haven't managed more than rescuing a few people and slowing the fires' progress.

That's because the fires aren't completely natural.

Quebec City is the heart of French Catholic Canada, and the obvious target for anyone who hates that aspect of the Dominion. But it isn't the English or the Anglicans who are causing the fires. It's not even the Indians. No, the people responsible are probably the last anyone would suspect—the Italians.

Specifically, the Vatican. Originally, Canada was considered part of the diocese of Rouen, and thus under the authority of the Archbishop of Rouen. In the 1650s, the Pope (Alexander VII) appointed a Bishop of Petraea and Vicar Apostolic of New France, and thus recognized New France as its own entity, with its own Catholic leaders. That tradition has continued, with Canada forming its own dioceses and parishes.

Lately the Vatican's been worrying that they've let too much power slip from their hands, particularly with a land as large and bountiful as Canada—especially when the Anglicans already have such a strong presence there. So the Vatican has sent agents to Canada to “convince” the Church there to submit once more to its authority in all matters.

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Initial inquiries were rebuffed—the Church in Canada still accepts the Vatican as its spiritual leader, but doesn't see any reason to surrender control of its dioceses. So the agents have resorted to more drastic measures. They hope the fires will force the Church to call for spiritual aid, and then the agents can reveal themselves and quench the fires with their holy presence, thus demonstrating clearly the need for the Vatican's renewed presence.

The problem is, the Vatican is using forces it barely understands and cannot really control. Fire spirits are notoriously temperamental, as most shamans know, and often pretend to submit in order to find a weakness later. If the Vatican's agents cannot stop the fire spirits in time, the entire city could burn—and the Church in Canada might decide that either the Anglicans or the Indians—or both—are to blame. Which could make things even hotter in Quebec.

## LAKE MEMPHREMAGOG

Speaking of hard to control, there's Lake Memphremagog. It really does have a lake serpent called the Memphre, and the beast really is vicious. It's been living in the lake for the past few centuries or more, and it doesn't like visitors unless they bring lunch—or are lunch. But the reason the Memphre's been seen more recently is even more frightening than the beast itself. You see, the Memphre is a female.



A few years ago, it somehow sensed another of its kind, in Lake Okanagan, in British Columbia. That serpent is called the Opopogo, and it's male. You can probably guess the rest. That's why the Memphre has been more active lately, and has grabbed more people. It's preparing food for its babies, for when they hatch. Once they do, the entire Canadian waterway system could be afflicted with the hungry young serpents—and Canada's rivers and lakes lead back down into the Union.

## ONTARIO

Ontario's greatest concern right now is the Indians. Most of the Plains Indians are in the province, including the Cree and the Blackfoot. That means the Cree Confederacy is forming within Ontario, and so is the Blackfoot Confederacy. Not that Ontario doesn't have the space, especially in the frozen north where most Europeans don't go. But if an Indian War develops, cities like Toronto and Ottawa could be caught in the middle, and that could put the entire Dominion government in jeopardy.

## RIOTS

Ottawa's got enough to worry about without a war raging around it. The split between laborer and politician is widening, and shows no signs of letting up. Already laborers have rioted a few times, but now the politicians are starting to do the same. Macdonald is actually at a loss for once—he can deal with armies

and congresses and nationwide meetings, but these riots are too close to home and too mindless for him to have much effect.

The military has tightened security all over the city, but most soldiers come from blue-collar families and their sympathies lie with the laborers. It's starting to look like the city may be cut in half to keep it from falling apart, with a clear dividing line down the middle. But if that does happen, what will the city's government do? How will the anti-politician laborers organize their city, without becoming politicians themselves? And how will that affect the government of the Dominion, having two smaller cities where it used to have one larger one?

What no one has figured out yet is that the Fenians are partially responsible for the current strife—and for once, it's less about attacking Canada than about sticking up for their own people. A lot of the laborers are Irish, and despite becoming Harrowed Murphy still supports his own. Some of his people (the still-living kind) have been deliberately riling up their fellow workers, pushing for a fight between the two sides. Why? Because the Fenians would love to see Ottawa split down the middle—and they'd be happy to offer their services in leading the labor half. It could give them the base they've been looking for right under Macdonald's nose.

## TORONTO

Toronto is also drawing some attention. A few years ago the city's factories won a lucrative contract to build railway cars for Canada Pacific. That provided a major boost for the city's economy and increased its importance.

Since then, several other cities have tried to get similar contracts, but the deals keep falling apart. At first this just seemed to be bad luck, but as it's happened more frequently people have gotten suspicious. No one's actually accused Toronto of sabotaging the other cities yet, but everyone is thinking it—and they're right.

Toronto's business council knew that allowing others to also build railway cars would weaken their own hold on the industry, so they took steps to prevent it. The result is a small team of industrial spies and saboteurs, mostly British, but with a few French as well. This team, referred to as the Railway Inspectors, scouts out possible rivals and then takes steps to prevent those cities from gaining railway contracts. They use misinformation, blackmail, kidnapping, and even murder to achieve their goals.

The government is starting to wonder about Toronto's monopoly. The Railway Inspectors have gone into hiding, but they'll probably show up again soon.

### BALDOON

Then there's the Baldoon, down near Wallaceburg. This little strip of land is, well—haunted. Nothing else can describe it properly. Three or four farms sit here, and all of them are subjected to frequent bouts of ghostly mischief—objects falling down for no reason, footsteps without feet or people, fires popping up and then winking back out, and animals with strange markings that resemble the old couple living nearby.

The old couple are in fact Harrowed, and have been for a very long time—their manitous control them fully, and wreak havoc on the neighbors. The real question isn't why the old couple causes so much trouble—it's why they stay there instead of looking for new victims, and why they only cause trouble occasionally.



The answer lies in the fact that the woman has a permanently broken arm, and the man walks with a limp. Both of them were shot, almost forty years ago, by a man named John McDonald, the head of the first family they tormented.

McDonald wouldn't sell the couple his land. They began to harass him, but a gifted woman nearby warned him to shoot any strange animals he saw with bullets of silver. He did, hitting a black-headed goose in the wing and a red-footed hare in the leg. The wounds remained even after the couple shifted back to their human form, and have weakened them, but the silver also binds them to the area, so that they cannot leave. Just don't stay the night near the Baldoon and you should be fine.

One of Ontario's other problems is specific to a single man—the Prime Minister. Seems there's a windmill with his name on it. The windmill itself isn't the problem—it was built in the 1820s at Windmill Point in Prescott. In 1838 the windmill was the site of a small rebellion, when a group of political reformers (and their American sympathizers) took control of the immediate area—they thought the rest of the town would rally to their cause, but that didn't happen and they were overpowered and captured four days later.

One of the men was Nils Szolteevsky, a Polish adventurer and former member of the French Foreign Legion—he was one of the mercenaries who had arrived with the Americans. Szolteevsky was tried in Canada for breaking

an "anti-mayhem" law, found guilty, and executed. So why does that matter? Because his defense attorney was none other than John A. Macdonald—and because last year Macdonald started getting threatening notes, each saying the same thing: "I died. Now it's your turn." Each one bears the return address of the windmill in Prescott.

Apparently Szolteevsky made it back from the grave, and he wants to discuss the trial with his former lawyer. Macdonald's sent a few troops out to investigate, but they've come back empty-handed. He's even ordered the windmill to be torn down and replaced with a lighthouse, but every construction crew that takes the job winds up quitting a few days later, claiming the place is haunted and that it's "out for blood." Macdonald's afraid that may be true.

## MANITOBA

Manitoba is the land of the Metis, one of the only provinces completely within the Winterline, and all thanks to one man—Louis Riel. Riel's just lucky he didn't actually kill Thomas Scott, as people had claimed, or he'd never have become lieutenant governor. Except that he did kill Scott. Fortunately for Riel, Scott came back Harrowed.

The Harrowed aren't exactly good luck charms. Since his return, Scott has been a thorn in Riel's side. He can't kill the man—he's already dead. He can't have him removed or Scott will tell people what really happened. Not everyone would believe him, but Riel's reputation would be shot, and he'd probably be forced to resign. So he tolerates Scott and lets him run loose throughout the province, hoping each time that someone will kill him for good.

Riel's got other things on his mind right now. To start with, there's the Favored Status bill he's pushing Macdonald to approve. If that happens, the Metis will be set forever. But Macdonald is being stubborn, and Riel's running out of time, because he's being pressured himself—by the French on one side and the Fenians on the other.

The French want Manitoba to support their bid to reclaim Canada and the Fenians want the Metis' aid in claiming Canada for Ireland. Both groups want to use the province as a staging ground. Either action could bring the Dominion down on them and destroy all hopes of winning favored status for the Metis. Riel's simply ignoring the French for now. It's the Fenians who concern him, because Murphy and O'Donogue know what really happened with Scott and are threatening to reveal that to everyone.

Fortunately, Riel isn't without means. He's the leader of the province and of the Metis people, a hero of the French Canadians, a favorite son of the Canadian Catholic Church—and a powerful shaman. It's that last strength he's been turning to more and more lately, first to help save Macdonald from the Pacific Scandal, then to stave off the Ice Age, and now as a way out of his own dilemma with Scott, Murphy, O'Donogue, and the French. Four problems, three factions. At least two of them would happily kill each other on sight—Scott is solidly Irish and hates the French, while the French would gladly murder any Fenians they meet. Riel is working on arranging an accidental encounter of all the parties involved, in a nice quiet area where no one can bother them—or rescue them.

Of course, that won't answer all of his problems. He still has to worry about the HBC, which has been trying to reclaim its position in the province for the last few years. They're already the strongest company in the Dominion, but they want a province to call their own. Since Manitoba is where they started, it's an obvious choice.

### RED RIVER

Then there's Red River itself. The Metis really did curse it, to prevent the British from settling there. The curse doesn't bother Metis, of course, but in order to open up the province completely Red River will have to allow outsiders to move in, and that means lifting the curse. Riel's been working on it for the past five years, and still hasn't figured out how to remove it.

Plus he and his shamans have to maintain their portion of the Winterline, by keeping the nature spirits appeased. Normally that wouldn't be a problem. But the Cree nature spirits keep passing through Manitoba, on their way to protect parts of the Winterline on either side of the province, and the local spirits are starting to get annoyed. The last thing Riel needs is for them to quit helping him—if that happens the Howlers will sweep in and cover half the province (the half above Hellstromme's fence) in eternal winter. The Metis will lose a lot of usable land, a lot of crops, and several booming settlements. Mediating with people is hard enough—nature spirits are even worse.

## NARCISSE

And then there's Narcisse. The snakes aren't drawn to the city itself, but to the waters that run beneath it, in deep caverns underground. More specifically, they're drawn to the great serpents that sleep within those caverns, and stir restlessly twice a year, as the moon tugs at them and the waters around them. The Memphre and the Ogoogo aren't the last of their kind. They're just the last ones left awake and above ground. The sleepers could wake up some day and Narcisse could find itself with a lot more to worry about than a few thousand garter snakes.

## BRITISH COLUMBIA

British Columbia's two greatest claims to fame are gold and ghost rock. The province is the only one in Canada where ghost rock has been discovered (at least, as far as anyone knows), and that's caused an enormous influx of treasure hunters, prospectors, and miners, plus the businesses that live off such people.

## BARKERVILLE

Barkerville is a popular destination, of course, and visitors always ask to meet Billy Barker and shake his hand, in the hopes that his good fortune will wear off on them. But Barker had more going for him than dumb luck. When he first arrived in Canada in 1858, he made a point of meeting a lot of different people, in the hopes of getting advice on where to dig. What he got was a whole lot more.

During a card game one night in Richfield, Billy found himself facing off against an old Indian. The two of them were the only ones left in the game, and the Indian was out of money, so he laid a small rawhide bag on the table instead. The bag was clearly full of something like powder or liquid. "What's that?" Billy asked him. "Gold dust?" But the old Indian smiled. "Better," he said. "This makes drawings, brings you power." Billy was intrigued, so he allowed the Indian to bet the small bag, and a few minutes later he'd won the thing for himself. The Indian disappeared that night, without a word.

Two days later, Billy and his partners decided to sink a shaft near Williams Creek. The first day didn't bring them anything but dirt, but that night, sitting around the fire, Billy reached into his pocket for his pipe and found the little rawhide bag instead. Figuring it couldn't hurt, he walked over to the shaft and sprinkled some of the powder from the bag across the shaft, in the shape of an X. The next day, they dug only a few more feet before hitting a rich vein of gold.

Billy never told anyone else about the little bag, and he keeps it on him at all times, on a cord around his neck. He's only used it twice—that first time, and again last year, when his money finally ran out. The first time brought him the gold, but the second brought something even more valuable—ghost rock.

From the feel of it, the bag's only got enough left for one more X. Billy doesn't want to waste it, but he is curious. Did it really cause the gold and the ghost rock to appear? And if so, why ghost rock the second time? Does the powder just bring whatever is the most valuable at the time, or

will the third X bring something completely new—and worth more than gold and ghost rock put together?

## THE HBC

Barkerville may be the center of the new ghost rock rush, but it isn't the most powerful entity in British Columbia. That distinction still belongs to the HBC. For the last few years, the HBC has been providing settlers in BC with new tools and devices far more advanced than anything else in the Dominion. They'll sell to anyone, of course, but the HBC has also created a "Buy-in" program for miners and prospectors who don't have a lot of money. The HBC sells its devices to these people at a significantly reduced rate, in exchange for a contract entitling the HBC to half of whatever the person finds. Many of those contracts have proven worthless, of course, but several have yielded silver, gold, and even ghost rock mines, adding to HBC's wealth and power. Their greatest regret is that Billy Barker refused to take part in the Buy-in program, saying that he'd succeed on his own strength or not at all.

Of course, the HBC is getting its gadgets from Dr. Hellstromme, down in Salt Lake City. The brilliant scientist is only too happy to sell to the British-based company, and in return he gets money, a percentage of whatever the HBC gets from its Buy-ins, and detailed information on the location and size of every major mineral discovery. The rumor is that Hellstromme's creating a mineral map of North America, calculating where all of the remaining mineral deposits are so that he can find them before anyone else.

## STIKINE RIVER

One spot that may be on Hellstromme's map is Eve Cone. This conical mountain is just south of Stikine River and just inside the Coastal Mountains, but it isn't a mountain. It's a volcano. Eve Cone is dormant, but its twin (called Adam Cone by most) is still active, though no major eruptions have occurred in centuries. The two Cones are the only volcanoes in the area, and a good 30 km from the river.

The other attraction of Stikine River is, of course, the Grand Canyon and its strange lights and noises that only occur under the new moon. That's because the Grand Canyon is home to a group of crazed Indians known as the Night-runners. This small band gathers on the night of the new moon to perform dark rites to the night-spirits. That's not so bad, right? Except that the Night-runners don't worship normal spirits—their gods are in fact manitou who have deceived them. And the manitou want blood. Anyone wandering the Grand Canyon during a new moon will likely find himself the honored guest of a blood rite—and the main course for the banquet afterwards.

## OGOPOGO

British Columbia's famous lake monster is the Ogo-pogo, in Lake Okanagan. As already mentioned, the Ogo-pogo is very real, and mated recently with the Memphre of Lake Memphremagog. The Ogo-pogo is a lot less aggressive

than its mate, and doesn't usually attack people unless provoked. That may change, however, once the babies hatch and the proud father decides the family needs more room to move.

## D'ARCY ISLAND

The other place you shouldn't visit is D'Arcy Island, site of the Chinese lazaretto. Why are Chinese lepers taken there, instead of the more usual lazaretto of Tracadie, in New Brunswick? Chinese immigrants had helped on the Transcontinental Railway, and one of them made the mistake of angering an old Indian shaman. The shaman cast a curse on the worker, summoning a dark spirit to "devour all of his flesh in that place."

The problem was in the wording. The worker died, his skin eaten away by what seemed to be leprosy, but it didn't stop there. The other Chinese workers also contracted the "disease." After they died, the spirit, strengthened by the sacrifices, reached further for more sustenance. It drew the Chinese lepers away from Tracadie, and its magics convinced the colony administrators to set up a new lazaretto on D'Arcy Island. All the Chinese who arrive there die within a few weeks, devoured by the spirit. But its power is spreading. Other Chinese in British Columbia are falling sick, and more and more are feeling drawn towards the island. If the spirit isn't stopped, it could devour every Chinese in Canada, perhaps even every one in North America.

## NORTHWEST TERRITORY

The North-West Territory is fairly quiet, compared to most of the other provinces. That's probably because it has fewer people.

## MISSING McDONALD

Right now it has one fewer than it should, which is causing some problems. Robert McDonald, the missionary who translated the Bible into the local Takudh dialect, has disappeared. McDonald's well-liked in the Yukon, and he's practically a saint to the local Indian tribes. His disappearance is making them angry and a lot of clans are girding up for war, planning to attack whoever took their friend.

The problem is, McDonald wasn't taken. He was changed. An Indian who didn't like him or his preaching offered McDonald some food and the man was too polite to refuse. But the food wasn't buffalo—it was human. Now this kind, gentle man of God roams the Yukon as a Wendigo, ravenous for more human flesh. Some of the shamans suspect magic took McDonald and they're asking the spirits for aid, but unless they find him and have some way to reverse the process, the man is a monster forever.

The longer he goes unfound and unrestored, the more likely violence could occur on his behalf. It won't even be aimed at the right people—the Church and the government blame the Indians, and the Indians blame the white men. Nobody stands to win if fighting starts, and everyone loses.

The only people who might be happy about McDonald's plight are the Raveners, a tribe of Indians who worship the

Wendigo. The Raveners consider the Wendigo to be creatures of great strength, and see their rage and bloodlust as Nature's defense against the degradations of the white man. They offer food to the Wendigo—in the form of captured travelers, or even their own old and infirm—and pray to take on some of the creatures' strength. The only reason the entire tribe hasn't become Wendigo is because they consider that to be the highest of honors. Only their greatest warriors and shamans are offered the chance to eat of human flesh and become one of the great creatures.

McDonald does have one thing working in his favor. He's Blessed, a true holy man, and that—along with the fact that he didn't eat human flesh deliberately or knowingly—has lessened the effects of the change. As a Wendigo, McDonald does feel the urge to consume human flesh, but thus far he's been able to sate himself with the flesh of animals and birds. If he does eat human flesh, the change will probably overpower him, and he'll lose what sense of human identity he has left.

### THE NORTHWEST PASSAGE

The Northwest Passage does exist, actually—but it doesn't connect North America to Russia. Instead, it's a natural bridge between this world and the Hunting Grounds. Spirits and manitou don't come through it, because of an ancient pact between them and the first shamans, but that pact ends if another band of humans ever reaches and crosses the bridge. So the manitou do their best to encourage humanity in its quest for the Northwest Passage, influencing dreams and hinting at

riches and fame for the man who finds the fabled land bridge. The Inuit are on guard, however—they know of the bridge, and the pact, and deliberately mislead anyone who gets close to locating the Passage from the North American side. Their brethren on the Siberian side do the same. The irony is that the Northwest Passage can be used to cross between the two continents, if you know how to navigate the Hunting Grounds safely. The trick is to leave the passage before reaching the far side, so that the pact stays unbroken.

Sir John Franklin learned the price of pursuing the Northwest Passage. A British explorer and former member of the Royal Navy, Franklin led four expeditions to the Arctic. The last set out in May of 1845—and disappeared. Nine years later, a surveyor named John Rae learned from Inuit hunters that Franklin and his men had abandoned their ice-locked ships and headed south. The hunters provided evidence from the ship itself.

In 1858 a new expedition, funded by Lady Jane Franklin, found several bodies on King William Island, along with supplies, small boats, and the ship's log, reporting that Franklin had died and the crew had abandoned the boats to head further south. In reality, Franklin accomplished his task, and located the Northwest Passage. The Inuit begged him not to proceed, but the explorer insisted on crossing the bridge and thus proving his find. That could not be allowed. The Inuit killed



Franklin and his crew (135 men in all), then carried some of the bodies and supplies to the south to confuse any rescue missions. The same could happen to any who get too close to locating the fabled land bridge, and risking the world as a consequence.

### FULLERTON HARBOR

The Mounties have been building a fort at Fullerton Harbor, in the Arctic Islands. The Dominion has in fact obtained full ownership of the islands, but they haven't announced it yet. Instead, Macdonald has ordered the Mounties to establish the fort there, with a full unit in residence. Once the fort is finished and the Mounties in place, the Dominion plans to reveal its ownership, catching everyone by surprise. All foreign whalers will be heavily taxed—Macdonald doesn't really care if the whaling is done by locals or foreigners, but he wants the profits to go to Canada, and plans to make sure that happens.

### ALASKA

Alaska doesn't have a government right now, since it's been abandoned by the Russians. But that doesn't mean the area is free. Actually, the Russians did manage to sell the place, finally—to the Union.

### HARD SELL

They'd been trying for years, of course—since 1859. The Union was interested, as a way to bleed off the rebels and nonconformists if

nothing else. But it didn't have the money, because all of its cash was tied up in the war. Alaska really was too far away and too cold to be worth what the Russians were asking—until a Union surveyor came back with a confidential report for Grant's eyes only. The next thing you know, the Union was paying Russia and signing the deed.

So why did the Union buy Alaska? Because of what the surveyor found, of course. Alaska's a rich land in terms of minerals. It's got gold and silver, oil and coal, but most importantly, it has large deposits of ghost rock.

The surveyor brought back a sample to prove it—a chunk as big as his fist. That was all Grant needed to see. With Alaska as a new source, the Union could finally pull ahead in the technology war. Any ghost rock the US doesn't use itself, it can sell to other countries for money or treaties. It's a sweet deal.

Just two things stand in the way of making this work.

### THE BRITS

First, Alaska is way the hell up north, and you have to cut through Canada to reach it. The Dominion isn't exactly fond of the Union right now. That's why the Union's been sending its men up there in small units, teams of soldiers, surveyors, and miners dressed in everyday clothes and pretending to be simple explorers. The British are starting to catch on, though—at first they thought all those new people in British Columbia were coming for gold and ghost rock, but lately they've noticed that a lot of the people aren't stopping anywhere. They're just moving on up north, towards Alaska.

The British, along with the Canadian military and the Mounties, are starting to check all the people coming through. Not that the Union doesn't have a perfect right to go to Alaska, of course, but Grant doesn't want to announce the acquisition until he's got enough troops up there to hold the place. If people find out too soon, they might wonder what makes Alaska worth buying, especially in wartime, and someone could steal it away by brute force. Grant knows he can't fight a war on two different fronts, so he's trying to lock down Alaska by stealth instead.

### THE TLINGIT

The second problem is the Tlingit. These Indians used to be peaceful, before the Russians showed up and threw them out of Sitka. That ticked them off, and the Tlingit as a tribe swore vengeance against the white man in general and the Russians in particular. They even called upon the manitous for aid, promising to dedicate deaths and destruction to the malevolent spirits. That's what the manitou like best, of course, and they readily accepted the pact, granting the Tlingit dark powers in exchange. Now the Tlingit warriors can melt into shadows and run along the wind, and their shamans can call forth earthquakes, snowstorms, great bears, and wolves. A few of the Union people have tried talking with the Tlingit, to show that they aren't as bad as the Russians, but they didn't survive the attempt. The Tlingit aren't interested in talking.

The other problem is Russia itself. They found out about the ghost rock right before the deed was signed, and would have backed out if they hadn't needed the money and feared the Tlingit.

But now, with the money safely back home, Russia has sent over new troops to reclaim their land—and the riches within it.

The one good piece of news, for the Union, is also related to the Tlingit. Apparently the manitou they called upon worked out a deal with the Howlers, or simply threatened them. However the creature managed it, the Howlers stay away from the Alexander Archipelago, making that the only sensible place to build a settlement. This means all the new settlers are staying in one place, making them very easy targets for the bloodthirsty Tlingit.



## THOSE IN CHARGE

Canada is a big place, with lots of different factions, organizations, and parties. Some of them are more influential than others, of course.

### PARLIAMENT

Officially, the dominant power in Canada is its parliament. That's almost true, too. Macdonald, in particular, wields enormous power. As Prime Minister he has almost total control over the actions of the federal government, and he can "strongly recommend" things to the provincial governments as well. Technically the parliament can overrule him by a majority vote, but since Macdonald is the leader of the Conservative party and the Conservatives hold the majority, that isn't likely to happen.

Macdonald is strongwilled, ambitious, dedicated, and almost completely unscrupulous. He genuinely believes that his actions will make the Dominion a better place, and he's willing to do almost anything to accomplish that. For the last five years, Macdonald's been trying to broker a treaty between Canada and the Union, to prevent any possibility of war between the two continental powers. Unfortunately, Grant isn't buying—he's too honest to sign a treaty he knows he might have to break, and the Union's too greedy to just leave Canada alone. Macdonald knows this. He's been hoping that the Civil War will keep

the Union occupied, but that may not last much longer, and the Canadian militia isn't nearly strong enough to take on the Union troops. So Macdonald's starting to look for help elsewhere.

One of the avenues he's been exploring is that of shamanic aid. Macdonald has access to several shamans in Ontario, and he's been able to win their support by making sure their tribes have good lands and receive favorable conditions from the government. None of these shamans are very powerful, but they can at least suggest what might be possible. Macdonald only knows one truly powerful shaman—Louis Riel. But he's already in debt to the Metis leader and would prefer not to owe him any more.

Another tack Macdonald is trying is the technological route. If he can arrange for Canada to get better equipment and weaponry than the Union, he can offset their smaller numbers and lack of experience. The HBC has proven a valuable ally for this, but Macdonald isn't sure they're fully committed, so he decided to go straight to the source. He's established communication with Hellstromme, but whether the doctor will agree to aid Canada directly isn't certain.

Mackensie is still in charge of the Liberal party, but probably not for long. He's a good man, but he's a little too honest to be an effective politician. The Liberal Party is getting tired of losing every fight, and the Pacific Scandal was a major embarrassment. They're looking to replace Mackensie with a new leader; one who's more ruthless. The Liberals' primary goal is to remove Macdonald from office. Once that's done and they hold the majority, they can decide what to do next.

The Earl of Dufferin has no real political power, but he is very visible, and his voice can lend a great deal of support and exposure to a just cause. That's really about all he can do, though, short of calling on Great Britain for aid. Britain is a little busy with its own plans right now, and probably won't answer any requests for help from the Earl alone.

## THE CHURCH

The Catholic Church has a great deal of power throughout the world, and Canada is no exception. Of course, it is strongest in Quebec and Manitoba, but it has churches and missions spread across the Dominion.

In many towns, the Church is responsible for education, which means it teaches the children and encourages them to follow its tenets and goals. The Church wields no legal authority except over its own property (where it has the same authority as any other landowner), but it can influence the decisions of its congregation, and thus can affect the voting process.

Currently, the Catholic leaders in Canada are Archbishop Turgeon of Quebec, Bishop Ignace Bourget of Montreal, Archbishop Alexander Taché of St. Boniface (Manitoba), Bishop Grandin of the newly-erected see of St. Albert (it was established in 1871), and Bishop Faraud of Athabaska (erected in 1862).

The other powerful Catholic leader in Canada is Father Lefebvre. He may be a mere priest, but he is considered the spiritual leader of the Acadians. He can call upon his entire congregation for support when needed.

## THE OTHER CHURCH

In many ways the Anglican Church of Canada is more powerful than its rival, the Catholic Church of Canada—the Dominion is, after all, a British country, and Britain is officially Anglican. Because of that, Anglicanism is the official religion in Maritimes, and the most common religion in several of the other provinces as well. Of course, that also means that the Anglican church has to struggle for independence, since several politicians feel the state religion should be controlled by the state.

As with the Catholic Church, the Anglican Church cannot intervene in legal matters, but it can influence events by appealing to its congregation, and particularly to influential Anglicans of the community. This control is strongest in the Maritimes, where the Anglican Church has the oldest and deepest ties.

Currently, the Anglican Church has three major leaders. Benjamin Cronyn, the first bishop of Huron, is the leader of the evangelical party. John Travers Lewis, the first bishop of Ontario, is the champion of the church party. John Medley is the first bishop of Fredericton, and belongs to neither party—he is considered the voice of moderation in the Church, and has gained a great deal of influence because Anglicans can approach him without worrying about the churchmanship issue.

## HUDSON BAY COMPANY

If you're looking to buy, sell, or trade out in the western provinces, the HBC is the only place to go. Their position as the largest company in Canada gives them tremendous economic power, and quite a few politicians are in their pockets. Out west, where the cities are smaller and farther between and the government doesn't have much pull, the HBC still controls the trading posts and general stores.

These are the centers of many towns, and often used as meeting halls for any town issues. Not surprisingly, the proprietors usually chair such meetings, and thus essentially fill the role of town mayor. The HBC is always looking for ways to increase its control. Recently, they opened department stores in some of the larger Canadian cities as a way to overcome their trading post image and regain the business of the cityfolk. The HBC has also expanded into shipping, using their own trading posts and stores as way stations.

The current governor of the HBC is George Joachim Goschen, who was appointed in 1874 (replacing Sir Hugh Alan after the Pacific Scandal). Goschen is a good leader, steady and patient and aware of the fact that smiling gets a man further than growling. In the two years since he's taken control, he's expanded the HBC's reach and improved its image, shifting from a primarily frontier operation to a more versatile and cosmopolitan corporation.

Unfortunately, Goschen may not stay in control much longer. His second-in-command, Eden Colville, is eager and aggressive, and not afraid to break a few heads to climb the ladder. Colville's been eyeing Goschen's chair for two years, and may not wait another one before making his move. If he does take control, the HBC may regret it—he's got none of Goschen's finesse or foresight.

The HBC has another issue of control right now. They hold the majority of shares in Canadian Pacific Railway, but they aren't the only shareholders by any means. The president of CPR, George Stephen, is also the president of the Bank of Montreal, which holds the second-largest number of shares. Stephen is a stubborn man, and doesn't take orders from anyone. Including HBC. He and Goschen have been butting heads for the last two years over CPR, its role in the Dominion, and HBC's role in the syndicate. Fortunately for Stephen, Goschen doesn't believe in killing good businessmen just because they argue with him. Colville isn't as considerate.

Meanwhile, the HBC is working on a few other things. One of those has to do with their property in the North-West Territories. The HBC holds a lot of land out there, but it's all above the Winterline, which means it's frozen and relatively useless. Fortunately for them, the HBC has access to the man who built the Winterline—Darius Hellstromme. They're negotiating with him to build a new Winterline, a boundary fence that would run all the way around their property. Hellstromme's willing, but he's holding out until he gets what he wants, which is more help linking Wasatch and the CPR together.

The HBC can't promise that right now, with Stephen heading the CPR and fighting them on every vote. Of course, if the HBC does get its way, and Hellstromme does build their new fence, they'll be in for a bit of a shock when their property stays winterized. Without knowing to talk to local shamans, they won't be able to attract any nature spirits to help.

## MOUNTIES

The other major power out west is the Mounties. Not only are they the police force, but in a lot of areas they're considered judges as well. The Mounties get a tremendous amount of respect from everyone in the west, from HBC to settlers to Indians to missionaries. They're the first ones to help out when someone needs a hand, and the last to leave, and that's a stronger recommendation than any badge or warrant.

Unfortunately, the Mounties are spread too thin to be effective as a true police force. They've had to resort to extraordinary methods. One of those methods is spiritual—the Mounties are on excellent terms with the local Indian tribes. Some of the local shamans have forged pacts with air spirits to alert the Mounties whenever there's trouble and even to carry them and their horses great distances to render aid more quickly.

On top of that, the Mounties have turned to technology as well. Through both the government and the HBC, they've acquired surveillance equipment well beyond what most people can buy, with telescopes and listening devices able to cover miles effortlessly. Observation posts have been established throughout the territories, with these devices set up at each

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corner—the Mounties back at the nearest fort can access these devices from a distance and search for trouble.

The Mounties' major bases are Fort Calgary, which was just established two years ago, and Fort Whoop-Up (they decided to leave the name, so that everyone would remember what had happened there). The leader of the Mounties is Commissioner Macleod—he's only been in charge a year, but he's been a Mounty since they first formed in 1873, and he led the troops to Fort Whoop-Up. Macleod's a good man, honest and direct, and he stresses to his men that they are there to help others, not the other way around. He's drilled into them the need to respect property, truth, justice, and life—usually in that order. It's Macleod's strong sense of discipline that won the Mounties the respect and assistance of the Indian tribes.

When Commissioner French retired last year, claiming that he'd seen too many impossible things to trust his own sanity any longer, Macdonald issued a new order to the Mounties. Now in addition to keeping the peace and helping build relations between the Indians and the settlers, the Mounties are charged with watching for strange occurrences, investigating anything unusual, and reporting anything that seems unnatural.

Macleod has even started assigning Mounties to investigate events in the other provinces, so Mounties are now appearing in Manitoba, Ontario, Quebec, and even the Maritimes. In many ways

they've become the Canadian equivalent to the Texas Rangers, except that the Mounties have fewer men, usually operate solo, and are charged primarily to study any strange events and report back. They only interfere when human lives are at risk—which, of course, is often the case.

## INDIAN TRIBES

The Indians of Canada can be divided into several major groups: the Inuits, the Coastal Indians, the Cree Confederacy, and the Blackfoot Confederacy. The Inuits and the Coastal Indians don't have any clear leaders—they operate on smaller kinship structures, and each extended family has its own leader. When clan meetings are called, all of the family leaders form a council, which deliberates and votes on any major issues.

The Cree and the Blackfoot are more hierarchical, with leaders chosen from among their tribes. The Cree have two leaders, actually—a war chief and a peace chief. Their war chief is Chief Big Bear (Mistahimaskwa), a powerful fighter and a noble leader. The real power in the Cree Confederacy lies with its peace chief, a younger man named Poundmaker (Pitikwahanapiwiyin). Poundmaker was the headman of the Red Pheasant band but his intelligence, eloquence, and vision made him stand out among the tribe, and he was elected peace chief. The Cree Confederacy was Poundmaker's idea, and it was his decision to petition for official sanction as a province of the

Dominion. Big Bear is a good man, but Poundmaker is far more intelligent, and better versed in the ways of the white man's world. He is also a shaman, like his father Sikakwayan before him.

### WISUKATCAK

There is a third leader in the Cree Confederacy, however, and his presence has already caused a great deal of trouble—and will probably only make matters worse as times goes on. The Cree have a warrior group, known as the Rattlers Society—this group lives for battle, and always fights together. Right now, the Rattlers Society is led by a man claiming to be the supernatural hero Wisukatcak, a central figure in many of the Cree myths. He has proven his skill in combat, and his ability with magic. The rattlers follow him without question.

Unfortunately, the man is an impostor. He isn't even Cree. Instead, he is one of Raven's Last Sons, sent to infiltrate the Cree and destroy their Confederacy from within. Raven wants all of the Indian tribes united, and cannot do that if the Cree refuse to join the Sioux Nation. So "Wisukatcak" was sent to create dissent, and to force the Cree into battle against the Blackfoot. The weaker Blackfoot will turn to the Sioux for help, and then together they can defeat and assimilate the Cree. Poundmaker has begun to suspect the Rattlers' leader of duplicity, but he cannot prove anything yet and doesn't wish to anger the warriors by accusing their leader. He's hoping to catch the supposed hero at something, though, and then publicly denounce him. Wisukatcak, meanwhile, has orders to eliminate Poundmaker if at all

possible. Right now, he's waiting until the Cree and Blackfoot battle, so that he can kill the peace chief and blame it upon the Blackfoot.

The Blackfoot leader is Chief Crowfoot, a strong man but one who does not take challenges lightly. Crowfoot has been known to kill men who questioned him, though he always does so honorably in single combat. He established the Blackfoot Confederacy mainly because his spies told him of Poundmaker's plan for the Cree, and Crowfoot refuses to let the Cree best them at anything.

He is not a mean man, or even an evil one, just a leader convinced of his own personal superiority and the superiority of his people.

## PUNTERS

The Acadians live in tight-knit communities, with everyone at least distantly related, and so they don't bother much with formal leaders. But they do have the Punters. These are expert boaters who patrol the marshes in their area, and know every current and stream. The Punters are usually older men, with younger apprentices, and they control the waterways in their community, announcing which passageways are safe and which are not and mediating any questions of right-of-way between two boaters. This is not an elected position—Punters are simply recognized for their skill and their knowledge, and are deferred to for that reason. A Punter's authority begins and ends on the water, however—on dry land, each family controls its own actions, and the entire community meets to discuss any larger issues.

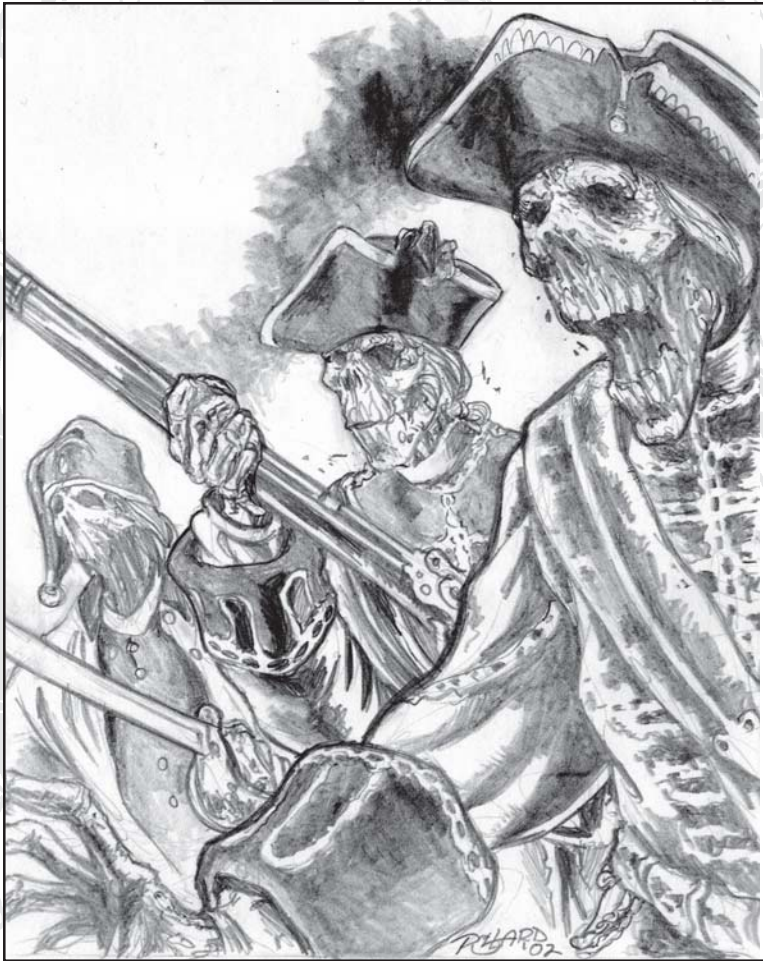
## COUREURS DU BOIS

The Coureur du Bois, "Runner of the Woods," is an interesting breed. They are true wilderness experts, not only trappers and hunters but explorers and woodsmen.

The coureurs du bois are usually European, but they are trained in wilderness lore by Indian tribesmen, and taught how to canoe, fish, trap, hunt, and snowshoe. They make their canoes out of birch bark like the Indians, dress as they do, and eat as they do (generally deer or buffalo meat and dried corn and peas). Coureurs du bois are trained to move through the wilderness without disturbing it, leaving no footprints, breaking no branches and bending no grass. They are excellent trackers, both of men and of beasts, and they can live off the land indefinitely, whether in the winterlands or in more temperate climes. Not surprisingly, many of them are Acadians, as those people are already close to the land and respected by the Indians.

The coureurs du bois began as explorers and trappers who had found particular favor with local tribes and were adopted by them, learning their ways and becoming Indian. Since that time, they've continued, either passing the knowledge to their sons or selecting boys to become their apprentice. In many ways, the coureur du bois is the Indian equivalent of the Mounty, but charged with protecting the wilderness above all else. They stop poachers from depleting the





stop Abominations wherever they occur. Several times the Mounties have encountered these mysterious woodsmen, and have even worked together a few times. Both sides have learned to respect the other, for both are honest and noble and dedicated to preserving life.

The Mounties are a police force, official and organized and very overt about their allegiance and actions, whereas the coureurs du bois are more subtle and more freeform, working either solo or in pairs and only dealing with people when necessary. The coureurs du bois have no clear leader—on the rare occasions when more than two have gathered together against a particular threat, they have deferred to the eldest among them as the most experienced.

## WEATHER WATCH

Well, if you're fixin' to take people out into the cold, you'd best know just what might happen to 'em.

Sure, you've been out in winter before. And that means you already know everythin' ya need, right? Wrong. And if you go out there unprepared, or send someone else out that way, it'll be dead wrong.

Winter is dangerous, and not just from the temperatures. It's what the cold kin do, to you and to yer surroundings, that you've gotta watch for. Here're a few o' the bigger examples, just ta get ya thinkin'.

That's right, Marshals, consider this a crash course in winter weather! We're gonna give you all the details and rules you need to make your player-characters wish they'd never set eyes on a parka or a mound of snow!

wildlife, prevent factories that would destroy rivers or valleys, shut down mining operations that could weaken cliffsides, and generally make sure that humanity does not scar Nature too heavily. That doesn't mean the coureurs du bois hate other people, or never kill animals, but they respect the laws of the land and try to maintain a balance between Man's desires and Nature's needs.

In the last ten years, the coureurs du bois have taken on a new aspect as well. They have become Nature's defense against the otherworldly, and they act to

# AVALANCHES

When you're up on a mountain, or even a decent-sized hill, you've got to be careful, and not just with your footing. Don't make any loud noises. Why? Because all that snow hanging up there above you is perched precariously. This isn't like dealing with shingles on a roof, where they're nailed in place—the only thing holding that snow there is gravity, and it wants everything down as far as it'll go. A single gunshot is enough to send literally tons of snow crashing down, as the sound waves displace the air and that pushes against the snow, dislodging it. You really don't want to be under all that when it comes down!

What kind of sound does it take to start an avalanche? The first question is whether it's even possible to start one there. Think about the surroundings—are there overhangs? Angled cliffs? Rocky ledges? Is snow caught on anything or coating anything that's not mostly flat and level?

You can have ten feet of snow on a plateau, and not worry about an avalanche—the snow's already on a solid flat surface, and it's stable. Someone could shovel the snow off the side, but it isn't going to leap over the edge on its own. But if you've got a mountain, or a steep hill, or a cathedral roof, something big enough to collect a large quantity of snow, you can wind up with an avalanche.

As far as the sound, it has to be loud, and sharp. Long or short doesn't matter—sound will echo anyway, so a gunshot will ring out for a full minute before it fades. The more precarious the snow, the softer a sound could be and still dislodge it. A sneeze can do it, as can a sharp cough.

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Footsteps won't, unless you step on something that snaps, like a brittle branch or a discarded bone or a sheet of ice. Vibrations can also cause the snow to fall. A small motor may not make much noise, but if it's on the ground, it's send out vibrations. Those vibrations are traveling through the nearby earth and rock and could easily shake loose any snow nearby.

The first sign of an avalanche is a faint rumbling, not underfoot but somewhere overhead. Then a light dusting of snow lands. That's followed by chunks of snow, ranging from fist-sized to buffalo-sized, tumbling down from the heights. After that comes a sweep of snow and ice, obscuring everything, blinding and choking, and either knocking everyone off their feet or burying them in an instant.

At that first rumbling, the characters should make a Hard (9) Smarts (Intelligence, DC 15) check. The TN for this check is Onerous (7) (DC 10) if the character is a veteran of the North. Success means the character recognizes the warning signs, and knows an avalanche is coming. From that instant, the characters have two rounds to seek shelter.

The ideal course of action is actually to find a path to higher ground, and go around the avalanche. Barring that, rock outcroppings are good, as are sheds, caves, and gullies. The trick is to find a place where the weight of the avalanche will pass overhead and keep going, but where you can dig back out afterward.

The first round of an avalanche the heroes are pelted with chunks of snow and ice. This causes 1d6 massive damage (4d6 damage, Reflex save (DC15) halves).

The following rounds are far more dangerous for characters that were caught in the open. They are carried along with the wave of snow, ice, and debris that are the avalanche proper. For the next 1d6 rounds, each hero is swept downhill by the wall of snow. This causes an additional 1d6 massive damage each round (2d6 damage). Armor provides no protection against this damage.

Once these rounds have passed, the avalanche is over. If the characters found shelter, they need to dig back out—this requires an Onerous (7) *Strength* check (Strength roll (DC 10)). The characters can attempt this several times, if necessary—how much time they have depends on where they sheltered and how much air they have.

If the character was caught out in the avalanche but stayed alert, digging out is also necessary, but the *Strength* check is Hard (9) (DC 15) and the character has two chances to succeed. Failing the final chance means the snow caves in around the person, and suffocates him or her.

One other note on digging out. It's important to know which way to dig—you don't want to find out you were actually digging further down, instead of up and out. If the characters are sheltered, they're fine—they know which way is out. For those characters who were caught outside, have them make a Hard (9) *Smarts* check (Intelligence

check (DC 15)) or Onerous (7) *survival: mountains* check (Wilderness Lore check (DC 12)). Succeeding means they know to spit—if you watch the spittle fall, you know which way is down.

## BLIZZARDS

One of the nastiest storm types known to Man, the blizzard has it all—it arrives suddenly, has fierce winds, driving snow and ice, and can extend for miles. Most people know enough to get inside if a blizzard's coming, and not go out again until it's over.

Blizzards move quickly, but the sky gives them away. When a bank of white clouds moves up suddenly and masses overhead, it means a blizzard's about to hit. For a slightly earlier warning, watch any animals nearby.

Animals have sharper senses than humans, and can sense a change in weather. If dogs start whimpering and birds scatter, it's time to get inside. Right before a blizzard hits, the air is completely silent—every animal has fled.

If caught in a blizzard, the smartest thing to do is drop to the ground and curl into a ball—that way you can't be blown away, and you can conserve more warmth. If you have any kind of shelter nearby, get under it—even a coat propped up on your saddle will help. The worst thing to do in a blizzard is stagger around—you won't be able to see where you're going, or what's underfoot, and you'll lose all your body heat as the storm rips at you.

Before a blizzard hits, characters can make a Hard (9) *Cognition* check (Wisdom, DC 15)—if they succeed, they've noticed the change in the weather, or the animals' reaction, and have about half an hour to prepare.

Once the storm arrives, anyone standing needs to make a Fair (5) *Nimbleness* check (Reflex save, DC 10) or be knocked off their feet by the strong winds. This should be done every round.

Every ten minutes in the storm causes 1d6 Wind damage (1d6 subdual damage) to anyone outside and exposed—this can be reduced if the character has partial shelter (like a large wooden plank the character is using as a lean-to or shield).

To determine how long a blizzard lasts, roll a d20. If the result was 1-10, the blizzard lasts a few hours—roll a d4 to see how many. If the result was 11-16, the blizzard lasts several hours—roll a d8 and add 4. If the d20 result was a 17-20, the blizzard lasts days—roll a d4 to find out how many.

Anyone caught out in a blizzard is considered snow-blind (see below) and is susceptible to frostbite. Don't forget about footing, either—those *Nimbleness* checks are all that's keeping people from slipping on ice and toppling to the ground. Walking is dangerous for another reason—since you cannot see where you're going, you could easily fall into a hole or a cave, or run into a wall, or crash through the surface of a frozen lake.

## COLD AIR

One thing to remember when dealing with a winter scene is cold air. That's more than just the fact that it's cold outside—the air itself is freezing, and you take that into your lungs with every breath. It hurts to breath such cold air, a sharp quick pain with every intake. That also means it's harder to take deep breaths, and harder to catch your breath after an exertion. At high altitudes, the

air is also thin, so it takes more air to get as much oxygen. But even at lower levels, it's harder to breath when it's cold. Characters accustomed to the North won't have much problem, but newcomers may get distracted and flustered by these short, regular pains in their chest.

## FROSTBITE

The cold has a way of eating away at flesh, turning it white and dead. When this happens, it's best to remove the dead flesh to avoid it spreading.

In subzero temperatures, characters with any exposed flesh should make Hard (9) *Vigor* checks (Fortitude saves, DC 15) every hour. Failing the check means the character has frostbite.

Some frostbite is minor, and can be cured, if treated quickly. Characters with frostbite have one hour to get indoors. If they are still outside after another hour, they take 1d4 damage. For every hour after that, they take another 1d4.

The best and easiest way to treat frostbite is to wash the affected area—but not with hot water. That causes too much shock to already-damaged flesh. Instead, wash the area with cold water, and rub gently to restore circulation. Gradually increase the warmth of the water. Then towel dry briskly. If a spot was frostbitten and treated within an hour, it is fine. If it was treated within two hours, make a Hard (9) *Vigor* check (Fortitude save, DC 15). If treated within three hours, the save is Incredible (11) (DC 20).

At four hours, or if the save fails, the area is too badly damaged to be restored. It needs to be cut away to save the healthy tissue around it.

The parts that get frostbitten most often are fingers, toes, nose, and ears. Toes are usually frostbitten only if the person's boots are not insulated, or if they get water inside the boot and then it freezes. Fingers are usually fine if decent gloves are worn. Noses and ears are harder to protect, though a good hood or mask can shield them.

## FREEZING WATER

The good news is that moving water won't freeze solid—the motion keeps it from turning to ice. The bad news is that the water can still be below freezing, even if it's liquid. Nothing draws heat from a body like immersion in freezing water.

It's difficult to tell whether a river is freezing just by looking. The best test is to stick a branch into the water, leave it for a few seconds, then pull it back out. You can feel whether the wet part of the branch is any colder than the rest. This isn't a very scientific test, but it might help. The other way, of course, is to stick a finger into the water. That definitely tells you if it's cold, but now your finger is freezing and wet.

Characters who fall into (or are foolish enough to wade into) freezing water need to act quickly and get out of the water as soon as possible. The first round in the water, make a Hard (9) *Vigor*

check (Fortitude, DC 15) to avoid going into shock (becomes stunned) from the cold. The second round, the check is Incredible (11) (DC20), and the same for every subsequent round. In addition, the character takes 2 points of Wind (subdual) damage every round. If the character makes it out of the water, check for frostbite immediately. If the character fails the *Vigor* check at any point, shock sets in—the character freezes up and sinks below the surface. Others can try to save the character within the next two rounds—after that the character has drowned.

Remember that, if you are wet and in below-freezing temperatures, your clothing will freeze solid. It is crucial upon escaping freezing water to strip off all wet clothing and gear immediately, rub dry vigorously, and then get warm as quickly as possible—a warm blanket and a raging fire are recommended, but dry clothes and warm bodies will suffice. It usually takes at least twenty minutes to stop shivering.

## ICE SHEETS

The other danger with water is ice sheets. These can be thin sheets on the ground, where water has fallen or snow has melted and then frozen before it could drain away. More often, though, these sheets are on the surface of rivers and lakes. The top layer of the water has frozen from contact with the air, and may be covered with snow as well. The problem with ice sheets is that some are several inches thick, and can be walked on without any risk, but others are paper-thin and will crack underfoot. The best method for dealing with ice is to use a stick, and to prod the ice firmly before

stepping—don't thrust full-force, like a spear, but put enough weight on the stick that flimsy ice will cave.

Characters who walk onto an ice sheet without realizing it (either because it was hidden by snow or because they didn't look down) should make a Hard (9) *Smarts* check (Intelligence, DC 15) or Onerous (7) (DC 12) *survival* check. Success means the character recognizes the faint crunch underfoot and knows he or she is standing on ice.

If an ice sheet starts to crack, it breaks in one of two ways—the crack turns into a fissure, and a section falls off, or the cracks radiate outward in a circle. This really depends on how close to the center the character is.

Near the edge, the piece slides away—a Hard (9) *Nimbleness* check (Reflex save, DC 15) means the character managed to stumble back to solid land, or leap forward onto the larger and still stable portion of the ice sheet. Failure means slipping off and plunging into the freezing water below (see above for the effects of this).

If the character is closer to the center of a sheet, it cracks outward, like the rays of the sun. This is far more dangerous, because all the ice nearby is also unstable. Characters should lay down on their bellies and spread-eagle to distribute their weight more evenly. Do this slowly—dropping quickly only puts more pressure on the ice and causes it to snap more quickly. Then inch backwards slowly. The safest method is to stay flat until completely off the ice—if that's too far, at least stay flat until several feet from the end of the crack, then slowly ease to your feet and walk away. Never run on an ice sheet—not only is it liable

to crack, it's also slippery, and falling full-force will break anything less than a few inches thick.

Thick ice sheets have an added danger as well. They can fissure off—a thick ice sheet or ice block usually won't crack outward—but those broken-off pieces can be dangerous because they're large, thick chunks of ice, often with razor-sharp edges. People have stepped onto thick ice sheets, had the ice break beneath them, fallen into the water, and then had the same piece that just broke flip over and slam into their head, knocking them unconscious and underwater. If you do fall off a piece of ice, use your hands and arms to ward it away from your head, or take a breath and deliberately dive underwater. Then you can surface again after the ice has stopped shifting, and once you've figured out where everything is.

## SNOWBLINDNESS

One nice thing about snow and ice is that they're very pretty, very white...and very bright, when they reflect the sun. That makes it easy to see across a snowy field, but that much glare can damage the eyes. Every time a character spends eight or more hour outside looking at snow and ice (which means outside when it's sunny and there's snow and ice around, rather than actively staring at the ice itself), the character should make a Hard (9) *Vigor* check (Fortitude save, DC 15). Failing the roll means the character is snow-blind—the eyes

can't cope with the amount of light and glare. The character can still see blurry shapes, but not details—any actions requiring sight are at -6. Fortunately, snowblindness is temporary. If the character rests his or her eyes, either keeping them closed or staying in dim light or darkness, for eight hours or more, full sight returns.

### PERMANENT SNOW-BLINDNESS

It is possible to go snow-blind permanently, though, if the character does not rest and restore his or her eyes properly. Once a character is snow-blind, for every additional eight-hour stretch in bright snow and ice make another Hard Vigor (9) check.

Even if the character was indoors in-between, if he or she didn't take the full eight hours in darkness or with eyes closed, this roll is necessary. Failing the roll means the character needs an additional ten hours to recover. Failing the roll twice (meaning the character was out for at least twenty-four hours in snow and ice, without proper recovery in-between) means the character is now permanently snow-blind.

### TWISTERS

These are not really winter weather, of course, but twisters do crop up in Canada (especially in Tornado Alley) and it's good to know what to expect. The first thing to know is that a twister never appears out of a clear sky—they're formed when two weather fronts collide, so you've always

got a storm before you get a twister. Normally the sky goes green, but this is hard to tell at night or with snow and ice everywhere. Twisters spin down from the sky, and if you're lucky (or unlucky) you can actually see one forming, as if someone were twirling the storm cloud and dragging it down on a stick. Until that whirling funnel touches the ground, it's just the cloud in motion, but once it hits the surface you've got a full-fledged twister.

The good news about twisters is that they're smaller than the storm that made them—most are only ten to forty feet across at the tip. It's entirely possible for a twister to pass within yards of you and not move you at all. The problem is that this small size makes it harder to predict them—a twister can change direction without warning, make turns, and even double back on itself. It can also disappear, rising back up into the storm, and then drop back down at a new location. As long as you can see the twister, and it's a safe distance away, you should be fine—just be ready to run in case it decides to head your way.

Twisters are basically just intense winds spinning in a tight circle. They can destroy almost anything in their path, shattering wood and stone and sending pieces flying at high speeds—even if the twister itself misses you, you can still get hit by a high-speed flying caribou, and that's not as funny as it sounds.

Within twenty feet of a twister, a Hard *Nimbleness* check (Reflex save, DC 15) is necessary to stay standing. Within ten feet, the TN becomes Incredible (II) (DC 15). If a twister passes within five feet of you, you're airborne. At that point, you're at the mercy of the

storm, it could set you back down a few miles later, disheveled and breathless but unharmed, or it could fling you across the province like a rock in a slingshot.

The hero remains airborne for 1d10 rounds. At the end of this time he takes damage as if he had fallen from a height equal to 1d10 times 5 yards (15 feet).

### DEALING WITH FUNNELS

The safest way to deal with a twister is to avoid it—stay well beyond the storm, or wait until the twister touches down and then run in the opposite direction, keeping it in sight at all times. But if you are caught near one, try to go underground.

Most houses in tornado country have storm cellars for just such occasions—the twister may rip the cellar doors off their hinges if it passes right overhead, but if you stay down in the corner you should be able to ride the storm out okay.

If you can't get below ground, find a doorway to stand in—those are more stable than, because the wood is braced together tightly, so it has a better chance of surviving intact. You can also tie yourself down to something like a well or a deep pipe—of course, if that goes flying you'll go with it, so be careful.

The best thing about twisters is that they don't last, and they don't stay—most pass right through an area, and disappear after twenty minutes to an hour. So if you can survive that long, you'll be fine. Just remember to watch the skies—even after the twister's gone, some of the stuff it uprooted could still be flying around, and you don't want to be under a tree or a house when it lands.

## NORTHERN ABOMINATIONS

Canada's got many of the same abominations seen in the West, like the wendigo and the werewolf, but its also got a few critters all its own, as well. Most of 'em are cold-types, given that so much of the Dominion is snowed in for most of the year. But don't go thinkin' you're safe just 'cause you're in the south!

### THE BLACK DONNELLYS

The Donnellys are a sad case, and a good example of what can happen to Canadians who aren't too choosy about their revenge. An Irish Catholic family based in Lucan, Ontario, the Donnellys were called "Black" because they were Blackfeet Irish, but also because of their dark moods and dangerous tempers. In 1857, the father, James, killed a man in a bar and then disappeared into the wilderness. A year later he surrendered himself and was sent to prison. Donnelly was released in 1865, and returned home—that's when the killings began.

During his year of hiding, Donnelly had discovered an Indian marker. He didn't know that it was a warning, alerting tribesmen to the presence of a manitou nearby. Donnelly stayed near the marker for several months, and the manitou used that time to work on Donnelly's mind and soul. When he was freed in 1865, he headed back out to the woods and to that marker.



Once there, following the instructions whispered directly to his mind, James Donnelly killed himself. He rose Harrowed. Then he went home and slaughtered his wife Johannah and their sons James Jr., William (known as "Clubfoot Will"), John, Patrick, Michael, Robert, and Thomas. Only their daughter Jennie escaped death, because the manitou thought it might be useful to have one family member still living.

Since that day, the Black Donnellys have taken control of Lucan, and are beginning to reach out to neighboring towns. They kill people at random, burn buildings to the ground, and torment everyone, both verbally and physically. The entire area is drenched in fear—and that's just the way the manitou like it.

Jennie Donnelly is still alive. Her family leaves her unharmed, but she's tormented anyway, torn between family loyalty and Christian mercy. She's kept locked in the family home, and allowed out only when the Donnellys need to deal with other people and don't want to reveal themselves.

#### PROFILE: BLACK DONNELLY

**Corporeal:** D:2d8, N:2d8, S:2d10, Q:3d10, V:2d8

Fightin': brawlin', club, knife 3d8, ridin' 2d8, shootin': shotgun 3d8

**Mental:** C:2d10, K:1d6, M:1d6, Sm:1d6, Sp:1d4

Area Knowledge: Lucan 3d6, ridicule 3d6, search 2d10, trackin' 2d10

**Pace:** 8

**Size:** 6

**Terror:** 9

**Wind:** 12

**Special Abilities:**

**Damage:** Bite STR  
**Harrowed**

#### D20 PROFILE: BLACK DONNELLY

**Black Donnelly:** Rwd 3

(Harrowed); CR 4; Medium-size Human; HD 3d10; hit points 33; Init +2; Spd 30 feet; AC 13 (+2 Dex, +1 armor); Atk +6 melee, +5 ranged, AL CE; SV Fort +6, Ref +3, Will +2; Str 17, Dex 14, Con 16, Int 10, Wis 10, Cha 12

**Skills and Feats:** Hide +6, Intimidate +5, Move Silently +6; Endurance, Improved Unarmed Strike, Power Attack, Toughness

**Special Abilities:** Thick Skin, Stitchin'

**Possessions:** Double-barrel shotgun, 20 shells, large knife, rugged clothing, heavy boots.

#### BLOOD AVENGER

The North has a violent history, and many massacres have occurred there. The ground is steeped with blood in many places. In some of those places, the blood has taken on a life of its own. It has pooled, and then risen, taking on form and shape and even intelligence. These are the Blood Avengers.

Blood Avengers appear to be Indian braves, but their skin and their equipment is the dark red of fresh blood, even their teeth and eyes. They do not speak, but seem to understand language. Blood Avengers have one purpose only—to hunt down those who killed their "parents" (the men or animals whose blood formed them) and avenge their deaths. Blood Avengers are armed with a

tomahawk and a bow and arrows, and the weapons are poisoned by their own hatred. It is difficult to damage a Blood Avenger, for its body is not solid.

If the Blood Avenger achieves his goal and avenges his parents' deaths, it dissolves back into a pool of blood that quickly dries. The resulting stain, however, can never be removed. Blood Avengers are always alone—no massacre, no matter how large, creates more than a single Avenger.

#### PROFILE: BLOOD AVENGER

**Corporeal:** D:3d10, N:3d10, S:3d12, Q:3d10, V:4d8

Bow 510, climbin' 2d10, dodge 3d10, fightin': spear 5d10, quick draw: bow 4d10

**Mental:** C:2d8, K:1d6, M:3d6, Sm:1d6, Sp:2d8

Overawe 4d6, search 3d8, trackin' 5d8

**Pace:** 10

**Size:** 6

**Terror:** 11

#### Special Abilities:

**Blood arrows:** These arrows are poisoned by hate and vengeance, and do STR+2d6, plus an additional 1d6 damage to the guts every day. The wound can only be healed by a shaman.

**Spear:** As with the arrows, except that it does STR+3d6, plus an additional 1d6 per day for the poison

**Insubstantial:** The Blood Avenger is not human, and not contained by flesh, so most attacks slide through him without causing damage. All physical attacks do half damage.

**Shamanic Blood Ties:** Blood Avengers take double-damage from shamanic rituals and blessed weapons, unless that shaman is from a tribe

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opposed to the Blood Avenger's parents—if the tribe is opposed, the Blood Avenger only takes normal damage.

**Coup:** A Harrowed who feasts on the essence of a Blood Avenger gains the ability to poison his weapons at will. This causes the weapon to do an additional 1d4 damage per attack.

#### DZO PROFILE: BLOOD AVENGER

#### Medium Outsider

**Hit Dice:** 3d8 (16 hp)

**Initiative:** +6 (+2 Dex, +4 Improved Initiative)

**Speed:** 30 ft.

**AC:** 17 (+2 Dex, +5 natural)

**Attacks:** Spear +8 or bow +5

**Damage:** Spear 1d8+5, bow 1d6

**Face/Reach:** 5 ft. by 5 ft./5 ft.

**Special Attacks:** Poison

**Special Qualities:** SR 14, Damage Reduction 20/+3, nightvision 120'

**Saves:** Fort +4, Ref +5, Will +6

**Abilities:** Str 20, Dex 14, Con 13, Int 14, Wis 14, Char 16

**Skills:** Intimidate +7, Listen +6, Search +6, Spot +6, Wilderness Lore +6

**Feats:** Improved Initiative,

**Climate/Terrain:** Canada

**Organization:** Solitary

**Challenge Rating:** 4

**Treasure:** None

**Alignment:** Neutral

**Advancement:** None

#### COMBAT

Blood Avengers like to attack from ambush when possible.

**Poison:** The poison on the Blood Avenger's weapons causes 1d4 Con damage.

## DAM KILLER

The name may seem like a joke, but these creatures definitely aren't funny! They look like badgers—if someone took a badger, made it twice the normal size, gave it an alligator's skin, and threw some spikes on its tail!

On land, these aren't that dangerous—they're too slow to catch most people, and so clumsy a normal man can easily avoid their attacks. But in the water they're fast, agile, and deadly.

Dam Killers target dams, both man-made and natural, and bridges, as well as small boats. They swim up beneath their target and then strike with their tail, usually hitting the same spot several times in rapid succession. Then they swim to the opposite side and attack again, alternating back and forth until the structure finally collapses. Fortunately, Dam Killers aren't carnivorous—they attack people who get in their way, but lose interest as soon as the person stops being a threat or an obstacle. Dam Killers normally work in pairs.

### PROFILE: DAM KILLER

**Corporeal:** D:1d4, N:1d6 (3d6 in water), S:3d8, Q:2d6, V:3d8

Swimmin' 5d6

**Mental:** C:2d8, K:1d6, M:3d6, Sm:1d6, Sp:2d8

**Pace:** 6

**Size:** 5 (4 feet long)

**Terror:** 5

### Special Abilities:

**Damage:** Bite STR, Tail STR+3d8

**Armor** 3

**Coup:** A Harrowed who feasts on the dam killer's essence gains the ability to swim at twice his normal speed

### D20 PROFILE: DAM KILLER

#### Medium Beast

**Hit Dice:** 2d10 (11 hp)

**Initiative:** +1 (+1 Dex)

**Speed:** 20 ft. (60 ft. in water)

**AC:** 16 (+1 Dex, +1 size, +4 natural armor)

**Attacks:** Bite +5 melee, Tail +5 melee

**Damage:** Bite 1d4+4, Tail 1d8+4

**Face/Reach:** 5 ft. by 5 ft./5 ft.

**Special Attacks:** None

**Special Qualities:** Natural armor

**Saves:** Fort +3, Ref +4, Will +2

**Abilities:** Str 18, Dex 13 (20 in water), Con 11, Int 2, Wis 10, Char 10

**Feats:** None

**Climate/Terrain:** Lakes

**Organization:** Solitary or group (2-3)

**Challenge Rating:** 2

**Treasure:** None

**Alignment:** Chaotic Neutral

**Advancement:** 2 to 4 HD

## FOREST GIANT

Known by the Indians of British Columbia as *Tah-tah kle'-ah*, this race is basically human, but taller and broader than most, averaging nine feet tall. The *Tah-tah kle'-ah* are carnivores, capable of eating any animal, but their preferred meat is human flesh.

Some speculate that they may be related to the wendigo, but the *Tah-tah kle'-ah* are intelligent, and can speak—they often lure prey by pretending to be a fellow Indian in need of aid.

Fortunately, there are only five of the *Tah-tah kle'-ah*, all women. Rumors speak of a male, the leader of the tribe, who does not

hunt but sends his women to bring back food. No one has ever seen him—at least, seen him and lived to tell of it.

### PROFILE: FOREST GIANT

**Corporeal:** D:3d8, N:3d8, S:2d12+4, Q:2d10, V:2d10

Climbin' 4d8, Fightin': brawlin' 4d8, sneak 5d8, throwin' 4d8

**Mental:** C:2d8, K:2d6, M:1d6, Sm:2d6, Sp:2d6

Search 3d8, trackin' 4d8

**Pace:** 8

**Size:** 11 (nine feet tall)

**Terror:** 8

### Special Abilities:

**Damage:** Bite STR+2d6, Claw STR+1d6

**Mimic:** Forest giants can imitate any creature they have heard (an opposed *Cognition* roll is required to detect the deception)

### D20 PROFILE: FOREST GIANT

#### Large Giant

**Hit Dice:** 4d8 (29 hp)

**Initiative:** -1 (-1 Dex)

**Speed:** 40 ft.

**AC:** 12 (-1 Dex, -1 Size, +4 natural)

**Attacks:** 2 claws +7 melee, bite +4 melee

**Damage:** claws 1d6+5, bite 1d4+5

**Face/Reach:** 5 ft. by 10 ft./10 ft.

**Special Attacks:** Improved grab, Mimicry

**Special Qualities:** Darkvision 120 ft.

**Saves:** Fort +7, Ref +1, Will +2

**Abilities:** Str 20, Dex 9, Con 15, Int 12, Wis 10, Char 10

**Skills:** Search +6, Sneak +5

**Feats:** Power Attack, Toughness

**Climate/Terrain:** Forests

**Organization:** solitary or group (3-5)

**Challenge Rating:** 4

**Treasure:** 3d12 dollars, plus equipment from slain victims

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**Alignment:** Neutral Evil

**Advancement:** 6 to 10 HD

### COMBAT

Forest giants prefer to attack solitary travelers.

**Mimicry:** The forest giant can mimic the noise of any animal it has heard. Detecting the deception requires the hero to win a contest of Intelligence with the giant.

### HOOP SNAKE

Stories are told of these strange snakes that curl themselves into circles like living hoops and roll across the ground instead of slithering. The stories claim they can roll faster than a man can walk, and that their bite is so poisonous it'll kill a man dead in minutes and make anyone who touches him sick from the seepage.

### PROFILE: HOOP SNAKE

**Corporeal:** D:1d4, N:1d6, S:1d4, Q:4d12+2, V:2d4

Fightin': brawlin' 5d6, sneak 4d6

**Mental:** C:2d8, K:1d6, M:3d6, Sm:1d6, Sp:2d8

**Size:** 2 (three feet long)

**Pace:** 6 (see below)

**Terror:** 5

### Special Abilities:

**Damage:** Bite STR

**Poison:** The hoop snake's bite causes 3d6 poison damage to the location bitten. This damage is inflicted again each minute. Once a limb is maimed, the hero begins taking damage to the guts. The only way the damage

stops is if the hero makes an Incredible (11) *Vigor* roll or the poison damage fails to inflict a wound. Anyone touching a hoop snake victim, must make a Hard (9) *Vigor* roll or suffer 2d6 poison damage (one time only, per touch).

**Rollin':** A hoop snake can curl itself into a circle and then roll. When moving in this fashion, the hoop snake's Pace increases to three times its Nimbleness die, or 18.

## D20 PROFILE: HOOP SNAKE

### Small Beast

**Hit Dice:** 1d10 (6 hp)

**Initiative:** +4 (+4 Dex)

**Speed:** 90 ft.

**AC:** 15 (+4 Dex, +1 size)

**Attacks:** Bite -2 melee

**Damage:** Bite 1d2

**Face/Reach:** 5 ft. by 5 ft./5 ft.

**Special Attacks:** Poison

**Special Qualities:** None

**Saves:** Fort +3, Ref +7, Will +1

**Abilities:** Str 6, Dex 18, Con 10, Int -2, Wis 10, Char 8

**Feats:** None

**Climate/Terrain:** Prairies

**Organization:** Solitary

**Challenge Rating:** 2

**Treasure:** none

**Alignment:** Neutral

**Advancement:** 2 to 4 HD

## COMBAT

Hoop snakes normally only attack when cornered or if surprised.

**Poison:** The hoop snake's bite injects a powerful poison. It does 1d6 Con damage. The hero must make a Fortitude save (DC20) to

avoid taking 1d4 secondary Con damage each minute thereafter. The secondary damage ends as soon as the hero makes his save. Anyone who touches the victim must make a Fortitude save (DC15) or take 1d4 Con damage.

## THE HOWLERS

These three Manitou are responsible for the Ice Age in Canada. It is impossible to tell one from another, though nature spirits and other manitou may see distinctions. Normally, the Howlers appear as enormous ice storms, roiling white clouds spitting snow and hail and sleet in all directions.

The Howlers also have a secret—they can take on human form. In this shape, the three manitou appear to be three tall, well-shaped women, ivory-pale, with white-blond hair and glittering eyes the pale blue of frozen water. All three are lovely, but their beauty is cold and sharp, and they never smile. Their teeth are pointed and slightly jagged, like small icicles, and the Howler-women's breath creates puffs of visible cold even near a fire. Their fingernails are long and sharp, like shards of ice, and their touch leaves a person shivering. Fortunately, the Howlers rarely take human form—they usually do so only to gain information or to torment selected victims.

The Howlers are creatures of cold, and delight in bringing their wintery touch to the world. They sweep down upon towns, caravans, people, and even empty stretches of land, flattening everything with a barrage of ice, snow, sleet, and hail, ripping down structures with their biting winds, and then gallop away, leaving the sky to clear behind them so quickly people

wonder if they dreamed the encounter. Howlers have no love of killing, though. When you die, your torments are over. They prefer leaving people to suffer, to feel the cold creeping over them and watching their own limbs turn white and cold.

### PROFILE: THE HOWLERS

**Corporeal:** D:4d8, N:3d8, S:3d12+6, Q:3d10, V:2d12

**Fightin':** brawlin' 5d8

**Mental:** C:2d8, K:2d4, M:3d12, Sm:3d6, Sp:4d12

**Overawe** 5d12, **scrutinize** 4d8, **search** 4d8

**Size:** 14 (6 in human form)

**Pace:** 30

**Terror:** 11

#### Special Abilities:

**Damage:** Claw STR+1d6

**Armor:** 4

**Immunity:** Howlers are immune to cold-based attacks and electricity-based attacks. They are also immune to poison, sleep, paralysis, and stunning. They take only half damage from mundane weapons unless in their human form.

**Ice:** The Howlers can fling shards of ice as a ranged weapon attack. Each shard does STR+1d6 damage and has a Range Increment of 10 yards. They can create and throw as many as twenty shards each round—in human form the Howler can only create two shards each turn.

**Wind:** The Howlers can generate intense winds. These winds do STR damage from flying debris. Anyone caught by these winds (twenty yards, centered on the Howler) must make an Incredible (11) *Nimbleness* check or be swept off their feet and tossed 2d6 yards away.

**Whiteout:** The Howler creates a sudden deluge of snow and ice. This causes blindness, dizziness, and disorientation. All characters caught in the whiteout are at -3 to all movement, and -5 to all sensory checks.

**Poor Night Vision:** The Howlers are adapted to whiteout conditions, and can handle glare on the snow and ice without a problem. Because of that, they cannot see well in the dark, and suffer -2 to all rolls.

**Weakness:** Howlers take double damage from weather-based attacks and spells (unless they are cold-based), and double damage from fire-based attacks.

**Coup:** A Harrowed who devours a Howler's essence gains the ability to fire ice shards as described above. Each shard fired costs the Harrowed hero 1 Wind. These points are regained normally.

### DZO PROFILE: THE HOWLERS

#### Huge Outsider

**Hit Dice:** 16d8+80 (150 hp)

**Initiative:** +4 (+0 Dex, +4 Improved Initiative)

**Speed:** 60 ft.

**AC:** 18 (+4 natural armor, +0 Dex, +4 wind)

**Attacks:** 2 claws +25 melee

**Damage:** claws 2d4+9

**Face/Reach:** 15 ft. by 15 ft./15 ft.

**Special Attacks:** Ice, Wind, White-out

**Special Qualities:** Natural Armor, Immunity, Weakness

**Saves:** Fort +12, Ref +6, Will +4  
**Abilities:** Str 28, Dex 10, Con 24,  
Int 10, Wis 15, Char 20  
**Skills:** Bluff +18, Concentration  
+23, Knowledge (Arcana) +16,  
Intimidate +21, Ridicule +16,  
Search +16, Sense Motive +18,  
Spot +18  
**Feats:** Cleave, Great Cleave,  
Improved Critical (Claws),  
Improved Initiative, Power  
Attack  
**Climate/Terrain:** Snow fields  
**Organization:** solitary or group  
(2-3)  
**Challenge Rating:** 14  
**Treasure:** None  
**Advancement:** None

### COMBAT

**Ice:** Each shard of ice does 2d6+2 damage. Howlers can fire twenty ice shards per round (in human form they can only fire two per round).  
**Wind:** Howlers can generate powerful winds as an attack, once per round. These winds do 2d6+6 damage, plus add +6 to any damage caused by flying objects. Characters must make a Reflex save (DC20) or be tossed into the air and thrown 2d6 yards away.  
**Whiteout:** The character is dazed and blinded for 1d4 rounds; make a Reflex save to halve duration.

### KILLER MOUSE

The Indian name for this critter is the *wi-lu-gho-yuk*, and they are avoided at all costs. The *wi-lu-gho-yuk* looks like an ordinary field mouse, but is infinitely more dangerous—the beast is the

mammal equivalent to a piranha, a rabid devourer of human flesh. The *wi-lu-gho-yuk* usually wait near roads and paths, hidden in the bushes, and strike when a person walks past. The tiny beast darts out of the bush, leaps onto its victim, and burrows under clothing and into flesh. Then it starts to eat.

The bite of the *wi-lu-gho-yuk* has a numbing effect, and its victims usually don't realize they've been attacked. What is worse, the little critter burrows into the body and then eats from the inside, moving around to find choice organs. It can take days for a victim to die.

Fortunately, the *wi-lu-gho-yuk* are small and relatively fragile, so if you run into one it's easy to smash it with a rock, provided it doesn't get to you first. Make sure, when you're in the woods up north (particularly Alaska or British Columbia), to check your clothes and especially your boots for holes. If someone in your party starts bleeding from several wounds for no clear reason, he may have a *wi-lu-gho-yuk* inside him. If that's the case, you need to strip him, track the beast, and then remove it, probably by burning it out with a hot stick. Be careful, though—it may decide to transfer to you instead!

### PROFILE: KILLER MOUSE

**Corporeal:** D:3d8, N:3d8, S:1d4,  
Q:3d10, V:1d6  
Fightin': brawlin' 3d8, sneak 4d8  
**Mental:** C:1d6, K:1d6, M:1d6, Sm:1d6,  
Sp:1d8  
**Pace:** 8  
**Size:** 1 (six inches long)  
**Terror:** 3  
**Special Abilities:**  
**Damage:** Bite STR+2d4  
**Numbness:** A Hard (9)  
Cognition roll is required to

notice a killer mouse bite. If the roll is failed, the victim does not notice any pain from the wound for 1d4 days.

**Burrow:** After a successful attack, the *wi-lu-gho-yuk* can attempt to burrow inside its victim. This is an opposed roll, the creature's *Quickness* versus the victim's *Vigor*. If the creature wins, it has disappeared beneath the skin. It can only be damaged by inserting a weapon into the wound. Any damage inflicted on the creature is also inflicted on its host.

### D20 PROFILE: KILLER MOUSE

#### Diminutive Beast

**Hit Dice:** 1/4d10 (2 hp)

**Initiative:** +5 (+5 Dex)

**Speed:** 20 ft.

**AC:** 18 (+5 Dex, +3 size)

**Attacks:** bite +1 melee

**Damage:** bite 1d2

**Face/Reach:** 1 ft. by 1 ft./0 ft.

**Special Attacks:** Burrow,  
Numbness

**Special Qualities:** Darkvision  
120 ft.

**Saves:** Fort +3, Ref +10, Will +3

**Abilities:** Str 1, Dex 21, Con 10, Int  
2, Wis 10, Char 10

**Feats:** None

**Climate/Terrain:** Wilderness

**Organization:** Solitary or Group  
(4-8)

**Challenge Rating:** 1

**Treasure:** None

**Alignment:** Neutral

**Advancement:** None

### COMBAT

**Numbness:** A Wisdom check (DC 15) roll is required to notice a killer mouse bite. If the roll is failed, the victim does not notice any pain from the wound for 1d4 days.

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**Burrow:** After a successful attack, the *wi-lu-gho-yuk* can attempt to burrow inside its victim. To avoid this, the hero must succeed at a DC20 Fortitude save. If the creature wins, it has disappeared beneath the victim's skin. It can only be damaged by inserting a weapon into the wound. Any damage inflicted on the creature is also inflicted on its host.

### LAKE SERPENT

This creature is similar to the California Maze Dragon, but smaller (Maze Dragons tend to be about fifty yards long, while lake serpents are only ten to thirteen yards) and faster.

Right now there are only two known lake serpents: the Ogopogo in Lake Okanagan and the Memphre in Lake Memphremagog. The two have recently mated, however, and the Memphre's eggs will hatch within the year.

Lake serpents have long sinuous bodies, serpentine necks, and heads similar to that of a horse, but with horns running in a ridge from brow to tail. They swim by undulating, so that most sightings are of several humps moving rapidly through the water.

Lake serpents live either alone or in pairs, and prefer their solitude—males are not aggressive unless attacked (or defending mate and young), but females are more assertive and attack anyone entering their territory. With her eggs close to hatching, the Memphre is feeling very aggressive.



## PROFILE: LAKE SERPENT

**Corporeal:** D:1d4, N:2d10, S:4d12+4,  
Q:2d10, V:2d12

**Fightin':** brawlin' 4d10, sneak 5d10,  
swimmin' 5d10

**Mental:** C:2d10, K:1d4, M:1d12,  
Sm:1d8, Sp:2d4

Search 4d10

**Pace:** 20

**Size:** 12 (ten to fifteen yards long)

**Terror:** 7

### Special Abilities:

**Armor:** 1

**Damage:** Teeth STR+2d6

**Constrict:** Lake serpents can wrap their long necks around a victim and tighten. This becomes an opposed *Strength* roll. Every round the serpent wins, the victim takes 2d10 in Wind damage. If the victim wins, he is able to break free.

**Swallow:** Lake serpents are capable of swallowing people whole. As with a Maze Dragon, this requires two raises on an attack roll, and for every round inside the victim takes 3d6 from stomach bile. The only way out is to cut a slit by inflicting 20 points of damage with a shotgun or cutting weapon.

**Special Attacks:** Constrict,  
Swallow

**Special Qualities:** Darkvision  
240 ft., natural armor

**Saves:** Fort +12, Ref +8, Will +6

**Abilities:** Str 27, Dex 12, Con 20,  
Int 6, Wis 10, Char 4

**Feats:** None

**Climate/Terrain:** Lakes and  
rivers

**Organization:** Solitary or paired

**Challenge Rating:** 10

**Treasure:** None

**Alignment:** Neutral

**Advancement:** 12-20 HD (Huge),  
20-28 HD (Gargantuan)

## COMBAT

**Constrict:** With a successful grapple, a lake serpent can wrap its long neck around a victim and tighten. This inflicts 2d6+9 damage each round.

**Swallow:** The serpent's mouth is large enough to swallow a person whole. If the creature gets 2 raises on its attack roll, it has swallowed its target. The victim takes 1d8 damage each round from stomach acid. The only way out is to cut a slit by inflicting 10 points of damage with a shotgun or cutting weapon.

## D20 PROFILE: LAKE SERPENT

**Huge Beast**

**Hit Dice:** 12d10+60 (126 hp)

**Initiative:** +1 (+1 Dex)

**Speed:** 60 ft.

**AC:** 15 (+4 natural armor, +1 Dex)

**Attacks:** bite +17/+12 melee

**Damage:** Bite 2d6+9

**Face/Reach:** 10 ft. by 20 ft./10 ft.

## MATLOSE

This vile creature is probably kin to the wendigo. It is manlike in shape, but bestial, with black bristles like those of a boar. Its claws are similar to the grizzly bear's, and can destroy a man with a single blow. Most fearsome about the Matlose is its hoarse cry, which can literally paralyze a victim with fear.

Usually found only on Vancouver Island, the Matlose has recently appeared far to the east, in the Maritimes and Newfoundland.

## PROFILE: MATLOSE

**Corporeal:** D:3d6, N:3d10, S:2d12,  
Q:3d8, V:2d10  
Dodge 4d10, fightin': brawlin' 5d10,  
sneak 4d10

**Mental:** C:2d8, K:1d6, M:2d10,  
Sm:1d8, Sp:2d8

Overawe 5d10

**Pace:** 10

**Size:** 8 (seven feet tall)

**Terror:** 9

### Special Abilities:

**Damage:** Bite STR+1d4, Claw  
STR+2

**Armor:** 2

### Night Vision

**Paralysis:** The matlose's cry can paralyze anyone within 20'. Roll the matlose's *overawe* versus the hero's *Spirit*. If the matlose wins, the hero is paralyzed for 1d4 rounds.

## D20 PROFILE: MATLOSE

### Medium Monstrous Humanoid

**Hit Dice:** 2d8 (9 hp)

**Initiative:** +5 (+1 Dex, +4  
Improved Initiative)

**Speed:** 30 ft.

**AC:** 14 (+3 natural armor, +1 Dex)

**Attacks:** 2 claws +2 melee, bite  
+2 melee

**Damage:** claws 1d6, bite 1d4

**Face/Reach:** 5 ft. by 5 ft./5 ft.

**Special Attacks:** Paralysis (Will  
save (DC12) to avoid 1d4 rounds  
of paralysis)

**Special Qualities:** Lowlight  
Vision 120 ft.

**Saves:** Fort +3, Ref +1, Will +3

**Abilities:** Str 11, Dex 13, Con 11, Int  
8, Wis 12, Char 8

**Skills:** Hide +5, Move Silently +5,  
Search +3, Spot +5

**Feats:** Improved Initiative

**Climate/Terrain:** Forests

**Organization:** Solitary or Group  
(2-4)

**Challenge Rating:** 1

**Treasure:** None

**Alignment:** Lawful Evil

**Advancement:** None

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## SNOW DERVISH

This particularly nasty creature isn't all that imposing, actually. It's built like a large monkey (though the beast is probably more ursine in nature), with longer front arms, human-like hands, and a prehensile tail. The snow dervish has thick white fur, to blend into its arctic home, and pale blue eyes that seem almost white as well. Its claws and teeth are sharp, and its tail can choke a child or weak adult, but it's not big enough or strong enough to threaten an alert and armed opponent.

The snow dervish's lack of strength caused the creature to develop a cunning way of hunting and gave it its name. The creature locates a target and buries itself in the snow, with its head tilted so it can peek out along the ground. It waits until the intended prey is alone and out of sight from others—perhaps the creatures are intelligent, because their favorite time is when a person goes off to “answer the call of nature.”

Then the snow dervish attacks. It raises up from its pit—slowly so the snow on its back and shoulders remains—and clenches its hands and feet while rising, to bring more loose snow up with it. Then the creature spins in a tight circle, arms spread wide, so that all the snow it's gathered floats up in a fine white mist. This causes a very localized whiteout, so that the target can no longer tell sky from ground, up from down, north from south. The target becomes disoriented, and

either falls over, runs into something, or walks off a cliff (which is the dervish's preferred method). Then the snow dervish strikes, wrapping its tail around the throat to choke, and tearing with its teeth and claws.

Snow dervish are meat-eaters and particularly love the taste of human flesh. They hunt alone, but often travel in small packs—the male finds and disables the prey, and then the female and children feed.

### PROFILE: SNOW DERVISH

**Corporeal:** D:4d8, N:3d8, S:2d6, Q:3d10, V:2d6

**Fightin':** brawlin' 5d8, sneak 4d8

**Mental:** C:1d8, K:2d4, M:1d8, Sm:3d6, Sp:1d8

**Pace:** 8

**Size:** 5 (four feet high)

**Terror:** 5

#### **Special Abilities:**

**Damage:** Bite STR+3, Claw STR+1d6

**Armor:** 1

**Whiteout:** This causes blindness, dizziness, and disorientation. All characters caught in the white-out are at -3 to all movement, and -5 to all sensory checks.

**Poor Night Vision:** The snow dervish's eyes are adapted to whiteout conditions, and can handle glare on the snow and ice. Because of that, they cannot see well in the dark, and suffer -2 to all rolls.

**Coup:** A Harrowed who devours the snow dervish's essence becomes immune to glare and blindness from bright lights.

### D20 PROFILE: SNOW DERVISH

#### **Small Monstrous Humanoid**

**Hit Dice:** 1d8 (5 hp)

**Initiative:** +7 (+3 Dex, +4 Improved Initiative)

**Speed:** 30 ft.

**AC:** 14 (+1 natural armor, +3 Dex)

**Attacks:** 2 claws +1 melee, bite +1 melee, tail +1 melee

**Damage:** Claws 1d4, bite 1d4, tail 1d6

**Face/Reach:** 5 ft. by 5 ft./5 ft.

**Special Attacks:** Improved grab, pounce, whiteout (dazed and blind for 1d4 rounds; make a Reflex save to halve duration)

**Special Qualities:** None

**Saves:** Fort +2, Ref +6, Will +2

**Abilities:** Str 7, Dex 17, Con 12, Int 6, Wis 10, Char 11

**Feats:** Improved Initiative

**Climate/Terrain:** Snow Fields

**Organization:** Solitary or Group (3-5)

**Challenge Rating:** 2

**Treasure:** None

**Advancement:** None

### SNOWRUNNER

These wild horses (sometimes referred to as "ski-hoofed mustangs") are normal mustangs except for two things. First, they are carnivores, and have the sharp teeth to prove it. Second, their hooves are elongated, almost like small skis, enabling the Snowrunners to gallop across snow and ice without difficulty.

Snowrunners move in herds, up in the frozen north—they sweep down upon a pack of rabbits or deer, killing with blows of their long sharp hooves, and then circle back to feed. Most Snowrunners are wary of humans, but a herd might attack if they outnumbered the potential prey or felt threatened in some way by the human's presence.

## PROFILE: SNOWRUNNER

**Corporeal:** D:1d4, N:2d12, S:3d12,  
Q:1d8, V:2d12

**Fightin':** brawlin' 2d12

**Mental:** C:2d6, K:1d6, M:1d6,  
Sm:1d6, Sp:2d8

**Guts** 4d8, **overawe** 2d6

**Size:** 10

**Pace:** 20

**Terror:** 3

### Special Abilities:

**Damage:** Bite STR+2, Hooves  
STR+4

## D20 PROFILE: SNOWRUNNER

### Large Beast

**Hit Dice:** 3d10+9 (26 hp)

**Initiative:** +1 (+1 Dex)

**Speed:** 60 ft.

**AC:** 13 (+1 Dex, +2 natural)

**Attacks:** 2 hooves +6 melee, bite  
+6 melee

**Damage:** Hooves 3d8+4, bite 1d10

**Face/Reach:** 5 ft. by 10 ft./5 ft.

**Special Attacks:** None

**Special Qualities:** Lowlight  
vision 60 ft.

**Saves:** Fort +8, Ref +10, Will +4

**Abilities:** Str 18, Dex 13, Con 17,  
Int 3, Wis 10, Char 10

**Skills:** Hide +4, Search +3

**Feats:** None

**Climate/Terrain:** Snow fields,  
northern plains

**Organization:** Herd (4-12)

**Challenge Rating:** 4

**Treasure:** None

**Advancement:** None

## SPIRIT BEAR

Polar bears are dangerous beasts, but at least they're natural. These things look like a polar bear gone wrong, and they're definitely not friendly! Spirit bears got their name from the Indians, who claim these creatures are normal bears possessed by evil manitou. They're right. The manitou were impressed by the size and power

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of the polar bear, and a few tried taking over their bodies. Fortunately, polar bears have powerful spirits to match, and put up a good fight. A few eventually lost, and these became the spirit bears. They now roam the northern wilderness looking for prey.

A spirit bear looks like a polar bear except for three things: its fur is jet black and streaked with a vivid red; its eyes are red, and glow in the night like hot coals; its claws and teeth are three times longer than normal, jagged, and rust-brown, as if the real parts were dipped in iron and then frozen dry.

Spirit Bears are usually found in the frozen wastelands of the Northwest Territories, but sometimes they wander into Alaska or British Columbia as well. They travel in pairs and threesomes and attack any other mammals they see.

The best way to fight a spirit bear is with fire. The manitou have focused their magics on enhancing the polar bear's natural resistance to cold and pain, and in making the body stronger and more dangerous. Since heat and fire aren't common up north they've overlooked that threat. One of the best defences against these monstrous abominations is a lighted torch.

## PROFILE: SPIRIT BEAR

**Corporeal:** D:1d6, N:2d6, S:3d12+4,  
Q:2d10, V:3d12+4

**Fightin':** brawlin' 5d6, sneak 4d6

**Mental:** C:3d6, K:2d4, M:2d10,  
Sm:2d6, Sp:3d8

**Pace:** 12

**Size:** 12 (roughly 10 feet long)

**Terror:** 9

**Special Abilities:**

**Damage:** Claw STR+2d6, Bite STR+2d6

**Armor:** 2

**Night Vision**

**Heat Sensitivity:** Fire does double the normal damage to a spirit bear, and a bright flame can dazzle the creature, giving it a -3 to attack for 1d4 rounds.

**Coup:** A Harrowed who feasts on a spirit bear's essence gains immunity to all cold and cold-based attacks

**D20 PROFILE: SPIRIT BEAR**

**Huge Magical Beast**

**Hit Dice:** 12d10+60 (126 hp)

**Initiative:** +5 (+1 Dex, +4 Improved Initiative)

**Speed:** 40 ft.

**AC:** 15 (+4 natural armor, +1 Dex)

**Attacks:** 2 claws +20 melee, bite +20 melee

**Damage:** Claws 2d4+8, Bite 2d6+8

**Face/Reach:** 20 ft. by 30 ft./20 ft.

**Special Attacks:** Improved grab, Pounce, Rake 3d12

**Special Qualities:** Darkvision, immune to cold-based attacks, fire-based attacks do double damage.

**Saves:** Fort +15, Ref +11, Will +6

**Abilities:** Str 26, Dex 12, Con 20, Int 10, Wis 10, Char 10

**Feats:** Improved Initiative

**Climate/Terrain:** Arctic

**Organization:** Solitary or Group (2-4)

**Challenge Rating:** 10

**Treasure:** None

**Advancement:** 12 to 20 HD

## NORTHERN RELICS

Canada's got plenty of spiritual history—a lot of magic's been worked here over the centuries. Some of the rites and pacts have long since faded, of course, but not everything's gone. A few of the pacts are still in effect. Some of the items created by shamans—and others—still remain. Of course, findin' them's the trick, ain't it?

### BERING'S COMPASS

Vitus Bering was one of the first to reach the land that became Canada, and his spirit bonded with the land with his first steps upon the shore. That bond was transferred to Bering's brass compass when he died, and the navigational aid still retains its ties to the Dominion.

**Power:** The wielder of Bering's compass cannot get lost in Canada or Alaska—he always knows which direction is north, and which direction he came from. The user also gains a +4 to any attempts to locate something in the wilderness (whether something he dropped or something he's hoping to find).

**Taint:** The user finds himself wanting to explore more of the wilderness, particularly areas where no one has been yet.

### BARANOF'S CANE

Alexander Baranof, first president of the Russian America Company, carried this ebony cane when he first arrived in Alaska, and walked with it throughout his tenure in that land. His determination to claim the property for Russia and to beat back the Tlingit has seeped into the cane itself, and is passed on to whomever uses it.

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**Power:** The owner of the cane can be knocked down, but will always get back up, even if the blow should have rendered him unconscious. This does not prevent damage from bullets or knives, but if the damage causes the owner to fall over it is reduced just enough for the owner to remain standing, or to return to his feet.

**Taint:** The cane's owner desires conquest and riches, and batters down any obstacles in his path, whether physical or otherwise.

### SHADOW CLOAK

This dark piece of cloth is part of the Tlingit Indians' arsenal, used by their warriors to sneak up on and murder Europeans as vengeance for the loss of the Tlingits' lands. It resembles a normal hooded cloak, though Indian symbols have been woven into the hem and around the edge of the hood. The cloak fastens at the neck with a piece of obsidian.

**Power:** The cloak grants its user the ability to become one with the shadows. This power only works at night or in darkness, but it gives the user a +8 to *sneak* and *Hide* rolls.

**Taint:** The wearer develops an overwhelming hatred for Europeans and tries to kill them at night whenever possible.

### THE WALRUS' TUSK

This is actually a harpoon, beautifully carved from a single piece of walrus tusk. According to Inuit legend, the tusk belonged to Father Walrus, the first of the majestic sea creatures, and was given to one of the early Inuits for rescuing him from a polar bear. Most harpoons are made with detachable heads, so that the shaft isn't lost if the harpoon

is thrown (the rope is attached to the head itself, and the shaft is set aside so the rope can be reeled back in), but this is an older style, with the head and shaft of one piece.

**Power:** The Walrus' Tusk grants its user a +6 to all *throwin'* rolls (attack bonus) using it. The harpoon cannot be broken or lost—if the target escapes with the harpoon still attached, the creature turns up dead the next day with the undamaged harpoon.

**Taint:** The Walrus' Tusk cannot be used against walruses—it simply will not leave the wielder's hand if he attempts to throw at them. It also instills a hatred for polar bears, and a desire to kill any that are spotted.

### THE VICAR OF WAKEFIELD

This tattered and water-damaged book is the same copy once owned by the British explorer Sir John Franklin, and was found in the sledge with some of the expedition's other belongings, years after they had all disappeared. Of course, Franklin didn't disappear—he was killed by the Inuit, to keep him from crossing the Northwest Passage. But Franklin's strange death, and the concern of the people who spent years searching for him, have soaked into the book along with the seawater, and have imbued it with a powerful energy.

**Power:** The owner of this book can broadcast his location to anyone he chooses. The people so chosen suddenly know exactly where that person is, and how to find him from their present

location. This ability works on command, and is not automatically updated, so if the owner moves he has to deliberately broadcast the new location. He can also send a brief sense of his condition—things like “All’s well” or “Danger!” or “badly hurt.”

**Taint:** The owner of the book becomes obsessed with finding the Northwest Passage, and does everything possible to search for the fabled land bridge.

### THE PIPE OF PERSUASION

The Earl of Selkirk came to Canada in 1812 to find a new home for his displaced Scottish farmers. He met with the HBC, and bought a large tract of land from them in some of the best farming country around. People often wondered how he managed to obtain such prime property for such an excellent price. The answer is at least partially in his pipe. This is a handsome curved pipe with a walnut bowl and an ivory stem. Selkirk smoked it frequently, especially when discussing business.

**Power:** The pipe must be filled with tobacco (any kind will do), lit, and smoked properly. When this is done, the smoker gains a +6 to any *Mien*, *leadership*, *Overawe*, or *Persuasion* rolls for as long as the pipe remains lit.

**Taint:** Every time the pipe is smoked, the smoker runs the risk of contracting lung disease. If this occurs (make an Onerous (7) *Spirit* check (Will save (DC10) each time), the user needs magical aid of some sort or he will die within four months.

### THE MICHEF SASH

According to local legend, this Assumption Sash was worn by the first Metis, a man named Michael Larousse. He was a famous trapper, and stories claim he wove his skills into his sash, so that his children could gain his abilities and help feed the family after he was gone. The sash is gorgeous, over three meters long and made of blue, red, green, and silver threads all woven together, with beadwork forming patterns along the surface.

**Power:** The Sash can be stretched to four times its normal length without damaging it or weakening it in any way. Upon speaking a command word, the sash reverts to its normal length, contracting rapidly back down. This can be used to trap animals in its folds. The Sash cannot be torn by normal means.

**Taint:** Whoever uses the sash finds himself hating the British as interlopers, and avoiding them whenever possible.

### BARKER'S MEDICINE BAG

This small rawhide bag is wholly responsible for the success of Billy Barker, and the rise of Barkerville. The bag contains a small quantity of bluish-gray powder. Barker has used the powder twice, both times to draw an X on the ground—the first time he found gold, and the second time he struck ghost rock.

But that's not really what the bag was made for. It was created for a powerful shaman, and the powder is meant to summon and bind spirits by drawing symbols on the ground and then chanting the proper rites. When Barker drew an X, he managed to summon a minor earth spirit, and it responded to his unspoken

wish. The remaining powder is enough to draw one more X—or a series of smaller symbols.

**Power:** Used by a competent shaman, it grants the shaman six Appeasement points for his ritual, before any cards are drawn. If used in this way, there is enough dust left for four rituals.

**Taint:** The user feels the need to share the results of his ritual with those around him—this is why Barker founded Barkerville, to share his wealth and good fortune.

### SILVER BIRCH ROLL

The coureurs du bois use silver birch for almost everything, from making canoes and tents to writing messages. A few of the older and wiser ones have been given these enchanted silver birch rolls, to make their travels easier.

**Power:** The roll can be shaped into any form without tearing, and stays in that form once a command word is spoken—it can be turned into a canoe or a tent, provided one builds a frame for it, or made into a basket or hat or simply used as a bed roll or pillow. Pieces can be torn from the roll, if the proper command is used, and the next day the roll is whole again. These pieces can be used as parchment, and whatever is written on them never fades, but it can be removed by another command. Pieces of the roll can be eaten. While they taste like bark, they provide a full day's nourishment (this can only be done once a week).

**Taint:** the user feels a compulsion to avoid cities and live in the woods, and to toss away any high-tech gadgets he possesses (anything more advanced than a rifle or telescope).

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### THE HEAD OF SISTER MARIE

Over a hundred years ago, the French constructed a fort at a cove in New Brunswick. They brought in some Acadians to help defend the fort. One of those Acadians was a nun named Sister Marie.

Sister Marie came to Canada to help the Acadians and was devoted to caring for the ill and destitute. Her superiors in France gave her a fund to dispense to the needy. Sister Marie buried the money for safekeeping. One night she was attacked by people demanding the money. She refused to reveal its location. They beat her and killed her. Sister Marie's body was found the next day—but her head was missing. It has never been recovered. Some people claim to have seen the nun's spirit at night, asking for help in locating her head. Others say they've seen her carrying her head, and asking that it be buried with her body, which was shipped back to France upon her death. No one has ever admitted to locating the real head, or the missing money.

**Power:** Whoever carries the Head can take the appearance of Sister Marie, a young, pretty French woman. The Head disappears from view, but must be held—if the Head is dropped or released, the illusion fades. While carrying the head, nothing can detect the user's true appearance.

**Taint:** The user can only speak French while using the head, and feels a strong urge to ask strangers to bury the Head with the body or to do so personally. This urge increases with every use of the Head.



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