

THE WAY OF THE NEW SCIENCE



DEAD LANDS

LUCIEN SOULBRO

20
system

SPENLER '91



THE WAY OF THE NEW SCIENCE



By Lucien Soulban

THE
WEIRD WEST™

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Dedicated to: John R. Hople, Our Resident Mad Scientist.

Prologue: Pride of the South

The hot Texas sun had long surrendered the sky to tempered evening, but its heat lingered in the soil like an afterthought. Sarah Jackson ignored the beautiful dusting of stars shining like a glorious quilt of shiny droplets, and stood on the porch of her ranch house, staring at a distant ball of approaching light. It wasn't hard to miss in the sea of country dark blanketing the farmland.

Sarah fidgeted a little, straightening out her black dress with its cuff-like collar and the hemline cut two-fingers on the safe side of prudence. Her peppered hair betrayed 45 harsh years of life already evident in the acrimonious and cheerless wrinkles cutting into the corners of her mouth and steely blue eyes. Although she kept her hair tied in a tight bonnet, a few wisps remained unfettered. She carried a leather-bound bible in one hand.

The light approached and the sound of wheels groaned in protest over the poor trail conditions. Sarah made out the approaching freight wagon more clearly with each second, and could hear the labored snort from the fatigued train of four horses. The lantern hanging from the driver's post jumped and jounced from the hard trail, but the coachman and his companion seemed unconcerned. Sarah could now see the two men wearing gray dusters, black Stetsons, and bullhide leggings as they passed under the ranch marquis.

"Can I help you gentlemen?" Sarah asked from the porch. "You seem a long way from Galveston."

Sarah watched the two men, but out of the crooked corner of her eye she saw three tumbleweeds just beyond the rail fence rolling slowly towards the wagon. Neither man seemed to notice them.

"Yes ma'am," the driver responded. He was older than Sarah by at least three summers, and wore his experiences in his white hair and weathered hands. His companion, still too young to grow anything more than a wisp of stubble, had the eyes of a pistoleer; he stared at folks with an eager will to fight.

Sarah noticed a flicker of recognition in the young man's eyes, and in a jackrabbit's heartbeat his hand was on his silver Colt .44-40. The driver was quicker, though, and closed his hand gently on the gunfighter's arm. Sarah realized they'd both seen the tumbleweeds coming up behind them.

"Yes ma'am, we are far from Galveston" the driver repeated, releasing his grip from his companion's arm, "but I was looking for the El Camino Real," he said, completing the password.

Sarah turned over the bible, revealing a knob. She turned it, and the three tumbleweeds stopped and reversed step. The young man turned to watch them retire into the dark countryside, noting the tumbleweeds were made from a tangle of barbed wire. At the center of the bramble was a suspended iron sphere that seemed to drive the contraption.

"Ranger Dillon I presume?" Sarah asked with her typical scowl. "You're late."

Sarah walked crisply to rear of the canvas-covered wagon.

"Beggging the ma'am's forgiveness, but the ice factory in Jefferson was..." Dillon stopped when Sarah pulled back the canvas to reveal two coffins. "President Davis wanted me to personally extend his condolences over the loss of your two boys..."

"Did you procure the ice Ranger Dillon?" Sarah asked brusquely, catching the man off guard.

"Yes ma'am," he said quickly.

"And did you line the coffins with ice?"

"Yes ma'am. Since Missouri, but it's long melted."

"Very well," Sarah said curtly, "bring your wagon to the barn and unload my boys there. We have much work ahead of us."

Ranger Dillon and his compadre exchanged quick glances; they were plainly surprised.

"Is there a problem?" Sarah asked; frost tinged her voice.

"Well ma'am," Dillon said prudently, "we've been traveling for a week, bringing your boys back home. We're awful tuckered. We were hoping for a roof over our heads for tonight ... can't this wait till tomorrow."

"This is highly improper," Sarah said with no small helping of admonishment in her voice.

"We don't mean to intrude on your grief ma'am," the younger Ranger piped in like a flute, "but I thought we could bury your boys tomorrow. Y'know, under the sunshine and after the preacher says a few words."

"This is Ranger Pickins," Dillon offered, almost apologetically. Pickins tipped his hat with a passionless smile.

"Actually," Sarah said, almost with a rattler's hiss to her tone, "I believe the army chaplain gave my boys last rites already. They don't need blessing twice."

Dillon sighed. It was obvious he wasn't fishing to go hungry tonight. "Well ma'am," he said, "we understand your concern, but we work for President Davis and General King directly..."

"Yes," Sarah retorted, "and they saw fit to assign you two as my errand boys. I know President Davis personally, and he trusts me enough to inform me of a great many trivialities ... like your recent troubles."

Dillon and Pickins sat there slack-jawed, stripped of their controlled Ranger veneer and suddenly mindful of their place.

"In the barn," Sarah repeated, her eyes unwavering. "Put the coffins on the two slabs," she said, returning to her house, "Wait for me."

"Yes ma'am," Dillon said, sorely deflated.

"And don't touch anything," she said, entering the house.

"Crazy ol' biddy," Pickins swore under his breath.

Dillon grunted and swung the reins of the tired hitch for the barn.

The barn was hardly such at all, save perhaps for its exterior husk. Inside, however, rested a madman's, or rather woman's, implements of tortured fancy. Two large slabs of granite dominated the room like pagan altars. The tables were angled slightly towards a sluice on the flat top of each, both of which were splattered with dark stains. They ended at a grimy drain at the foot of the tables, next to metal pans filled with a medley of bone-crunching implements: bone saws, rib-crackers, scalpels, and mallets. Flies buzzed around the viscera stains, probably living and dying without ever leaving those two tables.

Dillon and Pickins exchanged nervous glances, then disembarked from the wagon.

In one corner of the barn, a large generator spun and hummed in a perpetual drone, throwing off the occasional electrical spark. It powered the bare bulbs suspended from the ceiling on a thin cord of sheathed copper. In the other corner stood a shroud-covered form that cleared the story high loft; it looked like a statue yet to be unveiled and inaugurated.

Dillon and Pickins pulled the canvas cloth from the two wood coffins and hauled the first one over to the tables. The coffin leaked a splattering of brackish water from the interior.

Throughout the barn rested small work tables, shelves with a variety of pickling jars (whose contents remained mercifully clouded, but the flies seemed curious enough to cover their glassy surface), and anatomy charts. After setting the first coffin down, Dillon peered around but didn't care to move from his spot. He noticed wires from the generators leading to the different jars, the meat hooks hanging from the ceiling, and a large icebox in a corner. He decided at that moment ... he didn't want to know about any of this. Questioning people's actions had already sunk him in hot water with the wrong folks. He didn't want a repeat of that situation.

"Damn," Pickins whispered. "I thought you said she was an inventor."

"She is," Dillon responded absently. He went for the second coffin. "But I heard she also served in a field hospital in Kentucky, patchin' soldiers together."

"Her? A Nightingale?" Pickins asked, joining his compadre. They lifted the second coffin, spilling an ill-smelling puddle of blackish water.

"Not exactly..." Dillon huffed through his teeth. The two men set the coffin down on the second slab before Dillon continued uncomfortably. "I heard she had a knack for amputating limbs."

Pickins shook his head with a chuckle and made his way around the lab, slowly taking stock of his surroundings. He pinged a pickling jar with a flick of his fingers, scattering the local flies, before settling his eyes on the draped form standing next to the loft.

"What d'ya suppose is under here?" Pickins asked eagerly.

"Don't know and wouldn't care to find out. She said touch nothing."

"Aw, I'd wager most inventors say that."

"And with good reason I'd warrant," Dillon warned. "Besides ... they don't call them mad scientists without some truth beholding to that fact and I'm not eager to find out how she earns the title 'loco.'"

"Why not?" Pickins said, challenging the older Ranger.

"Because that's what got me in trouble in the first place son," Dillon retorted. "I wouldn't be pulling corpses around the south and packing them in ice if I'd stopped asking questions. Well I for one learned my lesson. I'm keeping my mouth shut, and you best do the same."

"Well, curiosity hasn't hurt me none."

"No, but I heard your libido did," Dillon observed. "Sleeping with that plantation owner's daughter? Not real smart. He had powerful friends."

"He had it coming," Pickins said, but his voice lacked the conviction of truth.

"Why they didn't boot you out of the Rangers is beyond me."

"Because they recognize my skills," Pickins said with a flourish. He drew his Colt, fast as spit, spun it twice before slamming it back into his hip holster.

"So that's why you're playing wet nurse to two cadavers?" Dillon asked with a half laugh.

"Heck," Pickins said proudly, "if this old biddy is important enough to return her two dead boys from the fighting, then President Davis thought it important enough to protect her cargo with me."

Dillon whistled at Pickins' observation. "Well now. Don't that beat all. You seriously believe in your own nonsense?"

Pickins shrugged. "Gotta believe something. It beats watching my every step like you." Pickins said with a grin. He bent down, grabbing a loose corner of the shroud. He was about to peer under the mammoth cerecloth when the form shifted slightly. Pickins backed away quickly, his silver Colt in his firm grip in a flash. Dillon grabbed his Winchester '73 rifle from the wagon.

"I said touch nothing," Sarah said with a biting edge. She stood at the barn door.

"It moved," Pickins replied, his eyes and gun steady on the cloth.

"It's supposed to ... that's why I built it." Sarah said.

"What is it?" Pickins asked suspiciously.

Sarah shot Dillon a stare. He kept his gaze on Sarah, but she could tell he was watching the shroud with half an eye.

"What about you?" Sarah said, challenging Dillon with an imperious stare. "Do you want to know what it is?"

"No ma'am," Dillon said, shaking his head in quiet defeat. "I don't."

"Good," Sarah said. She walked into the barn, past Pickins who remained intent on his target.

"The hell with that," Pickins said, "I want to know what it is?"

"Leave it be son," Dillon said before joining Sarah at the two tables. "If President Davis wanted us to know ... he would have told us."

Pickins ignored Dillon, but he backed away from the shroud, never surrendering his gaze from it.

"Help me open the coffins," Sarah said. Dillon complied, using his knife to pry loose both wooden lids. They clattered to the floor, unleashing the moist and musty scent of decay into the air. Dillon reared back slightly at the smell, but he knew it was probably sweeter than the view. Sarah seemed unaffected.

Sarah stared a silent, longing moment at the wreck of bone and flesh that remained of her boys. Their midsections lay open like Christmas morning presents, and their limbs torn roughly from their body like pulled wings from flies. One boy's face was a tunnel to the bottom of the box.

"We're sorry for your loss ma'am," Dillon said kindly. "I'm told your boys fought without peer."

"Spare me your platitudes Ranger," Sarah said, her moment of weakness gone. "My boys," she whispered to Dillon alone, "sacrificed their lives fighting for this great nation; they never shirked their duties to the Confederacy. And they never will either."

Sarah reached down and stroked the matted, blood encrusted hair on one corpse, its one intact milky eye staring up lazily.

The eye moved, focusing on Dillon.

Dillon almost let out a gasp, but Sarah caught his arm in her surprisingly swift and vigorous grip. The corpse watched them, its one eye lazily drifting back and forth in its loose socket. Pickins hadn't noticed yet.

"The Union," Sarah hissed softly, "has robbed me of my two boys ... twice already. If I knew 10 years ago what I know now, I never would have lost my husband."

Dillon remained motionless, painfully aware of the milky white eye staring up at him.

"God has seen fit to bless me with the knowledge of tending to my sons' most grievous injuries. They'll never stop fighting as long as they have mamma to sew them back up," Sarah said, stroking her son's hair. The eye squinted, seemingly content at his mother's loving caress. Sarah finally released her grip on Dillon, but she watched him carefully. Pickins, noticing the odd silence, glanced over at the pair. Pickins seemed less concerned with the shroud and a touch bored.

"Do you want to know more?" Sarah asked softly, almost challenging Dillon.

Dillon felt he was on the cusp of a monumental moment, one that would irrevocably change his life forever. One answer, he realized, would end his life tonight. The other answer offered no guarantees either, however.

"No ma'am," Dillon finally responded. "Just what the brass hats choose to mention is fine by me. I don't want to know."

Sarah nodded with a half smile. "Ranger Pickins," she said, redirecting her attention to the younger man "you seem awfully intent on what's beneath the shroud."

"Yes ma'am," Pickins responded. "I don't trust contraptions that move of their own accord."

"I need your help here Ranger," she said, "but if it'll ease your mind, then by all means, remove the shroud."

Pickins squared a suspicious look at Sarah. Dillon stared back at the milky eye, which watched him in return. Finally, anticipation got the better of Pickins, and he walked towards the shroud, Colt drawn. He pulled at the cloth cautiously, but it snagged.

"Unfurl the shroud," Sarah said. "Don't pull."

With a whisk, Pickins managed to unveil the mystery. There stood a large automaton vaguely humanoid with barrel-like limbs and chest, but an indistinct face. It was wrapped in thick coils of barbwire covering it from head to two like wire armor. Pickins whistled at the sight, and touched one of the many spur barbs.

"Capture," was all Sarah said.

Two coils of barbwire leapt from the form's chest and wrapped around Pickins like lightning. Pickins screamed while the wire tightened and the spurs dug into his flesh. He dropped his gun.

"Gently," Sarah coaxed the Barbwire Golem, "don't damage him too much."

"Dillon," Pickins cried, "help me."

The automaton lifted Pickins into the air and lumbered its way towards the coffins. The horses whinnied and snorted. Dillon stared at the milky eye a final time and silently walked out of the barn, escorting the horses by the hitch and leaving Pickins howling behind him in panic. Sarah was retrieving several jars from the shelf.

Ranger Dillon and Ranger Pickins sat on the wagon beneath the dawn sun. Neither man spoke, but Ranger Pickins bore rows of deep scratches across his exposed flesh and his duds had seen better days. The brim of his tipped hat also hid the suture marks keeping his skullcap attached to his head.

Sarah Jackson walked up to the wagon with a basket of comestibles and handed them to Ranger Dillon.

"Thank you for returning my boys," was all she said. She turned to Pickins. He leaned down and kissed her on her drawn cheeks.

"You be careful," Sarah told Pickins. "There almost wasn't enough left of you to save. Your brother will join you in a couple of weeks. He just needs healing."

"Where?" Pickins asked. His voice was rough, lacking Pickins' normal impertinence.

"Richmond," she replied before redressing her comment to Dillon. "Take my boy to President Davis." She turned back to Pickins. "Tell him I'm ready to proceed with the Patchwork Field Hospitals."

Pickins nodded, but Dillon kept his head low. Sarah studied the older Ranger a moment, but she could tell as he simply cracked the reins and hurried the hitch onward with a *hiyah* ... he didn't want to know. Not anymore.

POSSE TERRITORY







CHAPTER ONE: THE HISTORY OF A MADMAN

Crazier than all git out....

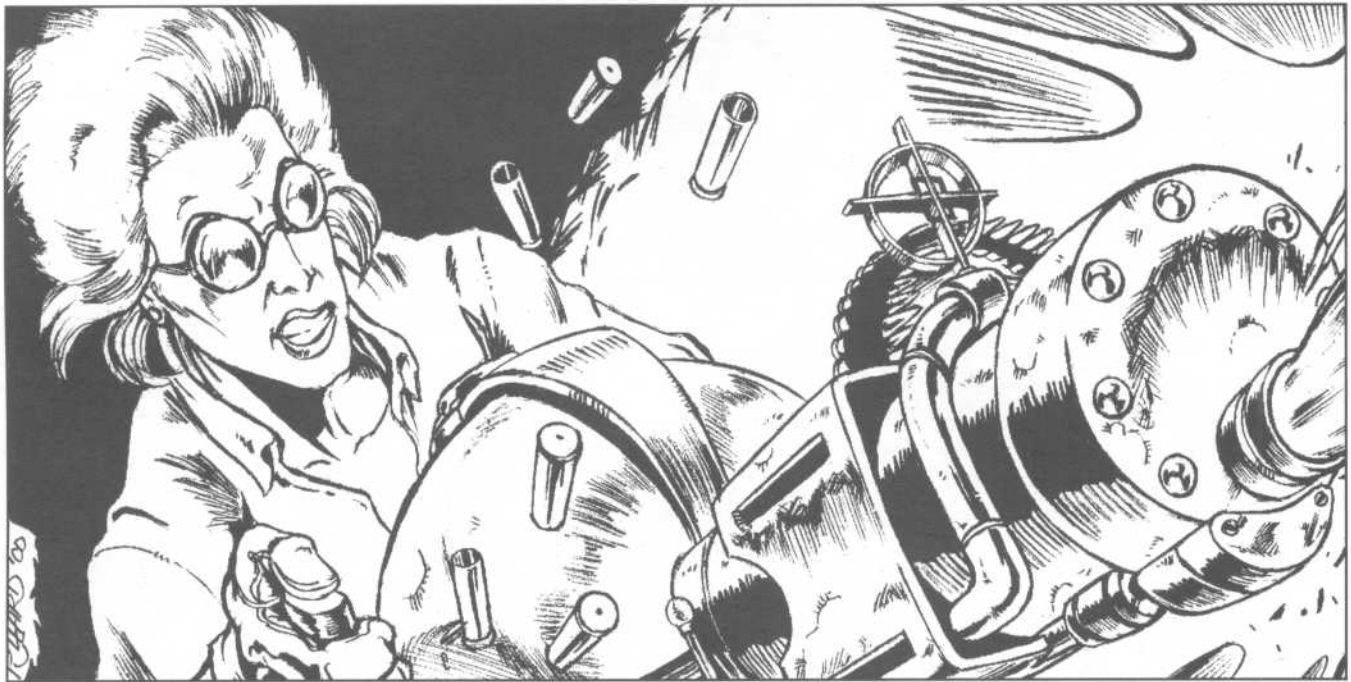
It began with dreams, though not the kind that drove Jean André Deluc to build the dry pile voltaic battery or Humphry Davy to isolate potassium, sodium, barium, and magnesium in the span of one year. No, these peculiar dreams started sometime after the Great Quake in 1868, right to the day survivors from the California flogging discovered this consumption of the soil called ghost rock. It burned hotter and longer than a bonfire in Death Valley at high noon, and fumed a noxious brew that caked the dreams of some folks like soot on a miner's face.

Of course folks didn't question where this ghost rock suddenly came from. All they knew was that it stoked the furnace of their fancy and taught them an entirely new set of scientific principles. Suddenly flying machines, gear zombies, and steam conveyances were all possible; all it required from them was the loss of their sanity.

Why do you think they call them mad scientists? It takes a special gumption to watch a husband and son stuff their dead wife & mother inside a contraption called a Holistic Rejuvenator. It was supposed to bring her back to life, and they thought it might actually work till she busted loose and tore out the husband's throat. That's

when the son knew he'd gone loco. He put both of them in the Rejuvenator before burying the entire contraption because he knew it would "make pa happy." Then he went on a killing spree, murdering other mad scientists for transgressions they hadn't committed yet. His name was Eugene Charles Clark, and they stretched his neck as tight as a guitar string.

You see that's the problem with being a mad scientist even before the lunacy creeps up on the blueprints. Think about it, a tinkers dream of these confounded devices that are supposed to make lives better. Some of them even do help, building contraptions for hospitals to ease the suffering of patients, or helping create mnemonic devices to help children read and remember their lessons. Most of them, though, build contrivances to kill each other quicker. Why in hell would anyone need a Gatling pistol or a gun that spits acid? Are they really doing the world a courtesy, or is vanity driving them to pursuits best left unexplored. That's what Eugene Charles Clark realized when he saw ma rise from the dead with about as much sense as a rattler on moonshine. Knowing something, and pursuing it are two different sins. Just because someone knows how to shoot a man don't mean he should. Same predicament with tinkering: there are some things they should build, and some things best left to the fancy of devils.



As Eugene Charles Clark said: "Fact is we're like snake oils salesmen who found Cortez's fabled Fountain of Youth. We're squandering our stock in human spirit and exploration without any thought for our actions. What if we're actually robbing the true geniuses of our time from accomplishing what they were meant to through pure moxy alone? What if we kill the spirit of the next Charles Babbage from ever developing a calculating device? Or destroy another Charles Darwin? Sure, we can invent things undreamt of by da Vinci, Newton, or Galileo, but our gifts aren't for the ages. They're only for ourselves; whatever spirit drove that invention dies with us ... if that invention was ever ours to start with."

"I'll tell you something son, mad scientists are the thieves of enterprise and real genius. Remember that when you're imagining 'what if?'"

Those were the final words of Eugene Charles Clark, self-proclaimed mad scientist and murderer, before the town of Dalton threw a rope necktie around his gorge and strung him from the gallows. Mr. Clark was part of a growing breed in the Wild West calling themselves inventors, entrepreneurs even. To everyone else, though, they're loco, and perhaps for good reason.

Eugene Charles Clark was a mad scientist, but he also murdered other inventors like himself; four that they could prove. Throughout his trial, he declared he was performing the local county a service by ridding them of vermin like himself. He claimed he knew their evils because he was like them before he realized the sins "I had wrought upon this

world." That may explain why he did it, but it doesn't touch on the how; each of his victims were murdered in particularly brutal ways.

Mr. Clark is a perfect place to start one's foray into mad scientists; he was the quintessential inventor wrestling with madness brought on by genius. Still, to understand these mad tinkerers, one must uncover their history first, and that is no mean feat. Most mad scientists have little notion as to their own origins, so most rely on the Tombstone Epitaph's articles from pioneers like Six-Hundred Pound Sally and Reggie Cornell, or on pamphlets from the Collegium that have found their way into public circulation. Mostly, these tales come from mad scientists here and about. What follows is by no means an omnibus of facts, but it's a respectable collection of certainties.

Icarus' Folly

Eugene Charles Clark made a distinction between folks he believed reputable inventors and those society calls mad scientists. Probably a wise precaution—one whose definition comes down to those folks who use ghost rock and those who don't.

Now admittedly, the distinction is slight, even blurred. Is ghost rock the catalyst for all this fuss? Doubtful. History and fables tell us of mad scientists down through the ages: Icarus and Daedalus who built wings from feathers and wax; da Vinci who dreamed of flying machines; Louis Pasteur and his use of vaccines. Were they crazy? Yes, or at least to the folks of those times. The trouble is, the onus of truth always falls on the inventor. Until she proves her schemes work, she stays a dreamer in the eyes of others. Often times, these utopians don't have the proper tools to bring their inventions to life; their imagination and insight usually outpaces technology by centuries.

Well, that was how things worked—until the discovery of ghost rock and the wave of insanity that followed.

Ghost rock first appeared after the Great Quake of '68, lining the cliff walls where California was hewn from the continental United States and cast off into the Pacific blue. Folks at the time thought the rock was coal, until they threw it on the fire and watched it blister for days on end spewing ghostly vapors. News of this unique mineral shot across the nation through the Pacific Telegraph Company, while hot on its heels rode the Pony Express, the California Stage Company, and even the American Camel Company with ghost rock samples for the scientists and geologists back East.

Folks claim that's when the first mad scientists "blossomed like weeds." They say the couriers carrying ghost rock were ripples, disturbing folks in their wake and spreading blighted coal black dreams across the continent like some impenitent vision of Manifest Destiny. Whatever notion folks hold true, it's undeniable that with ghost rock's discovery, wide-eyed inventors suddenly crept out of the woodwork like a plague of rats. They were all conjecturing about these fantastic devices fueled by the mineral, but despite their best efforts, none of them could parlay their visions into a tangible reality.

When prospectors discovered mother lodes of ghost rock, savants from Stanford and Harvard in the North, and Furman University in the South (among other respectable institutions) flocked to the West using school endowments to fund their travels and procure more samples for their institutions.

Many of these scientists, however, realized the lucrative potential of private undertakings, and vacated their tenure to develop new technology based on this so-called ghost rock; more than a few even offered their services to the Confederate and Union armies. To the reporters who accompanied these scientists, these formerly respectable figures had seemingly gone mad. In fact, some of them *had* already lost their minds.

According to tall tales recounted around the bonfire, that's how mad scientists first earned their monikers. When they boasted about all the wonderful inventions they envisioned with the newly discovered ghost rock, folks laughed at them the same way they probably did when da Vinci talked about his flying machine. That's when reporters coined the phrase "mad scientist" in their articles, and that's how the appellation spread.

While this label bothered some of the more excitable eggheads, most were too busy in their makeshift laboratories to give a fig what the press was calling them. They knew in their hearts that once their inventions were unveiled to the public, they would be vindicated. They would be heroes and they would usher in a new and wonderful age of enlightenment and prosperity with their New Science. They would be the saviors of mankind.

For a while, inventors were a laughing stock. Then, something happened—or rather, a someone—by the name of Professor Darius Hellstromme.

History of a Madman

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The Father of Steam

By all appearances, Darius Hellstromme emerged from nowhere in 1870, instantly a prominent figure in the scientific community when he arrived to the aid of the beleaguered State of Deseret. Since 1863, Deseret and its capital, Salt Lake City, suffered from the depredations of salt rattlers that claimed a fair

The Testimonial of Jethro Mullins

"We weren't given much opportunity to decline. Scuttlebutt was the Texas Rangers killed anyone who refused to accompany them to Roswell. A few of us escaped, including Hellstromme who fled to Deseret for protection, or killed anyone trying to press them into service."

"I wasn't as fortunate."

"The Roswell Fort was hellish. We labored night and day constructing devices for the Confederate war machine, and it was obvious old Johnny Reb was getting ready to launch a massive assault on the North."

"Now I thought I'd seen the gamut of devices, but there wasn't a week gone by when somebody didn't create something new. Some notions were just plumb loco, like the Monocle-Automaton. Damn thing had a magnifying glass for a head that focused sunlight into a beam of annihilative light. Last we saw, it busted out with its creator and ran off into the desert at high noon, setting anyone in its path ablaze. Then there was none other than Jacob Smith, of Smith and Robards distinction, who also escaped by nearly wrecking the compound after engineering a ghost rock explosion (I might add a few of us survivors want to thank Mr. Smith for nearly claiming us in his bid for freedom)."

"Afterwards the Rangers brought in Chinamen ... considered them more reliable. Seems these particular folk, called Daoists, were proficient in alchemy, so the Confederacy forced them to make different sorts of explosives."

"Unbeknownst to the Rebs, however, many of us were subverting our own devices, warranting their failure. Oh certainly, some scientists supported the Rebs, but those of us who didn't ensured our devices broke before the army could use them on the battlefield. They worked long enough to be convincing, and long enough for some of us to devise escape plans when Davis attacked Washington in '71."

"It was a good thing we escaped when we did too; Davis suspected sabotage after Washington and weeded out those traitors left behind. Many of our surviving colleagues died during the Union's Flying Buffaloes assault on Roswell in '72."

share of settlers. Hellstromme not only created a steam conveyance called a horseless carriage, which allowed the Mormons to outrun the large salt rattlers, but he devised many an implement to turn Salt Lake City into the so-called City o' Gloom and the most advanced place on Earth.

Many folks who have been inside its walls say it's more contraption than city, however, and poisoned with ghost rock's black soot. Still few can deny the lure of a stead where gas and hot water comes into your home through pipes, and electricity puts a sparkle on everything. Those who have money can live a life of relative ease in this frontier city.

Many folks attribute Hellstromme with fathering ghost rock disciplines, but the truth is, he wasn't the first. Being the first implies he discovered the secrets of ghost rock and shared them with his peers. Hellstromme is many things, but playing Samaritan with his inventions is not among them; he's just the magician brandishing his sciences with the most flourish. While Hellstromme was inventing and turning the city of Saints into a marvel, the Confederacy was employing every scientist they could corral into working at their secret base in Roswell, New Mexico.

Testimonial of Reporter Jasper Goodfellow on the Temple Masons

"While visiting Salt Lake City, I made several attempts to interview Dr. Hellstromme, all of which failed. Despondent and ready to leave the City o' Gloom with nary a tale to contribute to this article, I received a cryptic message for a rendezvous that evening. It spoke of a circle of mad scientists yet to be uncovered, a group operating in secrecy in many major cities including Salt Lake. I was inclined to dismiss such promises as spurious, but curiosity prevailed over sensibility and I attended."

"I was not disappointed, though I must admit I subjected my would-be informant to a fusillade of tests to authenticate his veracity. Having done so, I'm now observing his wishes for anonymity, and presenting this information on his behalf. For simplicity, I refer to him simply as Silus."

"When I met Silus, I was surprised he was in fact a Saint (a term the Mormons use for themselves). We met for five evenings, culminating when he snuck me past the city's Nauvoo patrols and into the Mormon Temple currently under construction. I won't say by which means he had such access, but needless to say gentiles are normally forbidden from entering. For the remainder of the evening, he showed me the various symbols that the builders were incorporating into the architecture, and told me of the Temple Masons, of which he was a part."

"The Temple Masons are a unique fusion of two movements, one religious and the other philosophical. The philosophical movement is similar to the Freemasons in that they harken back to the engineers who built the Temple of Solomon—a project so grand that the stonemasons had to organize themselves into groups and classes. Among them were the Sesha architects, under the regulation of master builder Hiram Abif, who ensured the structure was mystically sound through alchemy. Now reputedly, several masons murdered Hiram Abif after he refused to surrender his craft's secrets. Silus, however, claims his Masonic Order, the Sesha, not only preserved those mysteries, but even impersonated Hiram to oversee the completion of the temple."

"Silus says the Sesha survived through the centuries, associating themselves with Jewish Khabbalists, Muslim alchemists, and eventually the Knights Templar. By the fourteenth century, they galavandered about Europe as freemasons, helping build cathedrals and surreptitiously using Hiram Abif's secrets to turn these structures into mystic strongpoints against demons."

"Now the portion of this history lesson I found peculiar was their connection with the Mormons. In 1842, Joseph Smith, prophet of the Mormons, had a chance to study and meet with the Masons. Although nothing came of it, the Masons claim Smith borrowed a number of symbols and rituals from their practices, which the Saints deny adamantly. According to Silus, however, the Sesha were unhappy with how the Masons had split from religion, but they did find Joseph Smith's message heartening. They secretly joined the Mormons and became the Temple Masons. That's why the Salt Lake City Temple bears several Masonic symbols."

"More interesting, though, was that Silus claims the Sesha never forgot their skills in alchemy, and were still using them to help protect their building against "demons." When prospectors discovered ghost rock in the Wasatch Mountains, the Sesha applied this new mineral to their alchemy formulae with astounding results, becoming a new type of mad scientist."

"Silus claims he split from the Sesha because they've been indiscriminately using ghost rock in their constructions' mortar, including at the Salt Lake City Temple. He says that's why construction on the temple is taking so long: the Sesha are going back over portions built prior to 1870 and applying their ghost rock formulae to it. Silus also told me the Sesha are changing from their experience with ghost rock, becoming something he's uncomfortable with. Silus wouldn't elaborate, but promised me further updates in the future barring any misfortune befalling him."

The Enigma Societies

Depending on whom you speak with, Davis' fiasco in Washington was a Godsend to some and a scandal to others. It was a failure because it cast into question the dependability of devices built by mad scientists, throwing their sanity and skill into dispute. Other scientists didn't care much since it meant most folks would now ignore or overlook them as quacks. It meant governments wouldn't levy them into service against their will because it threw their creations' reliability into question.

Mad scientists, by appearance, preferred independence to union, but many discovered the benefits of sharing resources, ideas, and even outlooks with others of their ilk. Small groups of mad scientists formed around the prospect of mutual protection. Most notable among them was the Collegium, though they probably aren't the most interesting by some folks' reckoning.

The Collegium

The Collegium is probably the most widely recognized collection of eccentrics outside Smith and Robards themselves, though they initially did not set out for such recognition. When miners discovered ghost rock in the valley and mesas surrounding the justly named city of Gomorra, mad scientists flocked there circa 1868, attracted by its isolation and steady supply of the precious mineral.

At first the scientists were only cordial with one another, as birds of like feather are apt to do. By 1874, the loosely knit social club formed into a union of sorts with inventors sharing secrets and looking out for each other in the six-bullets-for-each-corpse town of Gomorra. Then Professor Hardinger arrived at the latter portion of 1874.

History of a Madman

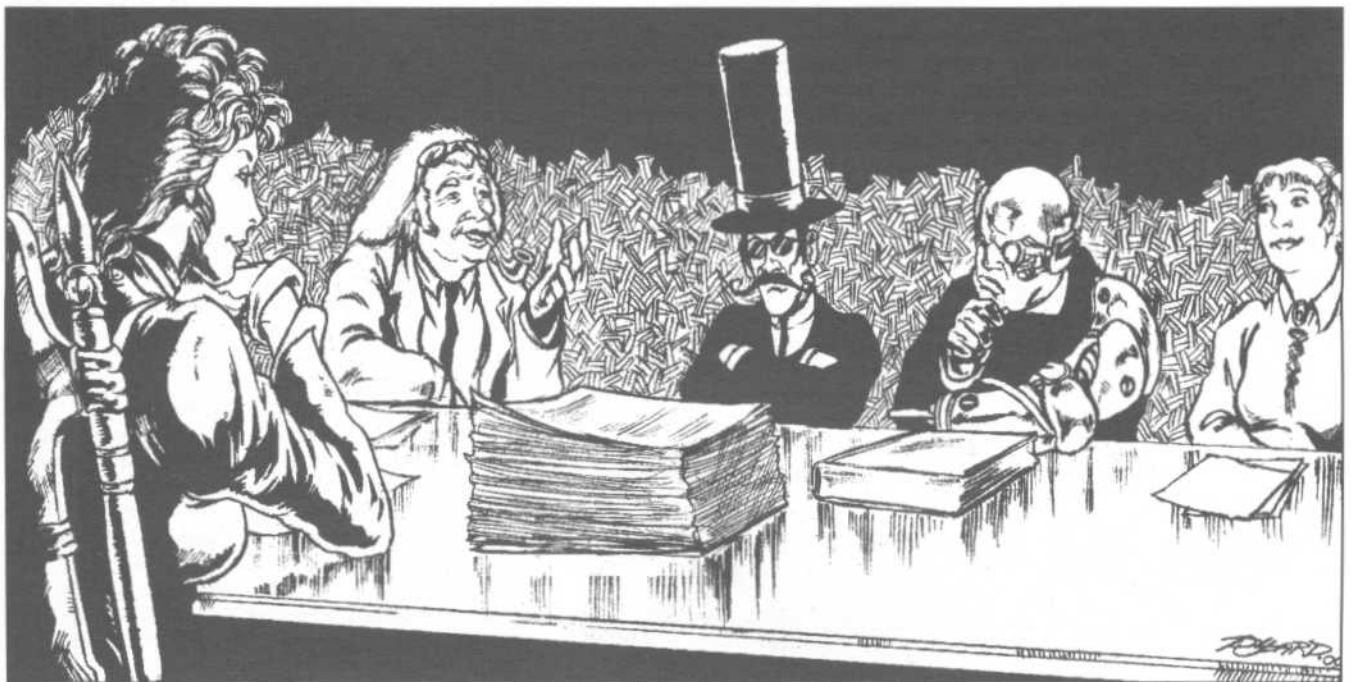
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Professor Hardinger, a mechanist and engineer, was also blessed with a leader's acumen and force of personality. He organized the scientists into the Distinguished Collegium of Interspatial Physics, and spearheaded the building of the Collegium's compound through pooled resources in 1875. For the next two years, the Collegium purchased more lots from Gomorra, finally crowning the north end of town.

Not everything was a fairy tale, though.

New tribulations awaited the Collegium, the first in the form of the Sweetrock Mining Company, which swept up most of the local claims on ghost rock. The Collegium's inventors, long holding to the belief of personal freedoms, objected to what they termed "another form of bully..." Rather than contribute to this state of affairs and Sweetrock's monopoly, an inventor named Fineas von Landingham used his impressive airship to "evade Sweetrock's economic blockade" and ferry ghost rock to the Collegium from independent miners. While this solved their most immediate concerns, it opened the league of inventors to a new crisis in the form of pirates.

Known as the Maze Rats, these ocean raiders ruthlessly pillaged small mining operations along Gomorra's vast cliff-face. This, in turn, pinched the Collegium's supply lines of ghost rock, but not enough for the inventors to challenge these scofflaws. That changed when the Maze Rats bushwhacked a French marine biologist by the name of Dr. Pierre Fontaine. While Dr. Fontaine was underwater, the Maze Rats pulled up alongside his craft and dumped chum into the water, spurring the sharks into





frenzy. They made short work of the helpless Frenchman, but drew the Collegium into the altercation. It ended when the Collegium showed their gumption by sinking the Maze Rat's pride, the *Typhoon* with a giant automaton, SUZY-309.

The skirmish convinced the Collegium to become more civic-minded and help enforce law in Gomorra. Unfortunately, this course of duty did not prepare the inventors for a sad series of events that culminated in the deaths of several members, the destruction of the Collegium's compound, and the near-ruin of the town of Gomorra itself.

Publicly, the event in question owed its existence to three catalysts. The first was the discovery of a large ghost rock seam directly below Gomorra itself. The second was the arrival of religious zealots calling themselves the Flock. They preached about the End Times before claim-jumping the contended ghost rock motherlode. The third was reputedly some poisoned hooch that spurred hallucinations in some folks and instigated a town-wide uproar that would have done Perdition proud in the scope of its discord and panic. Unfortunately, the so-called hallucinations of a gigantic demon named Knicknevin were real. For a brief moment, it was hell on earth, and had it not been for a collection of Texas Rangers, Law Dogs, Agency operatives, and mad scientists from the Collegium, Knicknevin would be making Gomorra his throne.

In the end, the Collegium fell to the same fires sweeping the town, and several mad scientists died fighting Knicknevin, including three prominent inventors. The Collegium, along

with Gomorra, is currently rebuilding their Eden behind stronger, steel-plated walls, while a recent alliance with none other than Dr. Hellstromme himself has placed the institution back on solid footing.

Smith & Robards

Folks often point at Smith & Robards as *the* business to fashion one's ventures upon. They are successful, despite their youth, and savvy in both their mechanical crafts and the notion of free enterprise. Their catalog enjoys national, and reputedly even international, distribution. They purchased Denver Pacific Rails in 1873 to secure their private supply lines of ghost rock and to allow continent-wide distribution of their products.

Most folks who've ever seen a Smith & Robards Catalogue know the story of the two enterprising men from the accounts of Dr. Erastus T. Gould. Jacob Smith, an inventor of lean means and leaner prospects, joined other scientists at Roswell in the hopes of a better life. When the truth made itself evident in Confederate cruelty, Smith escaped with several colleagues, eventually hitching up with the British philanthropist turned scientist, Sir Clifton Robards. The two opened up shop outside Salt Lake City, and despite vandalism that almost saw their factory burned to the ground, Smith & Robards were open for business.

Of course folks accustomed to the so-called Weird West, know most legends don't end that easily. Two matters of public record are Smith's refusal to deal with the Confederacy and the Texas Ranger's outstanding warrant on the inventor on matters of "sabotage and sedition" for the explosion he rigged when escaping Roswell. Now according to most accounts Smith and Robards are right-enough folk, but there are some allegations that their current compound was not their first.

Smith and Robards initially intended to build their factory on a mesa some miles northeast of Salt Lake City, nearer Wyoming for two reasons. Smith had an awful fear of the Confederates, and wanted to be closer to Union's Fort Bridger should the Rangers ever come calling. More importantly, the mesa was lined with ghost rock. With Dr. Hellstromme's near monopoly over the area's mines, it seemed like an ideal spot. Well, no sooner had the architects erected the first buildings at the site when Smith and Robards lost contact with them. Rightly fearing mischief, Smith turned to a posse of associates to help investigate the matter.

Unfortunately, the posse was ill prepared for what lay ahead. When they arrived, they discovered abandoned buildings and a whole mess of bloodied clothing torn to rags. It didn't take long to discover that the newly laid foundation for the factory had opened up a labyrinth in the mesa.

After several hours of searching, the posse finally found the culprits: a huge nest of tiny red worms in a large cavern. It was a plague of Old Testament proportions. No sooner did the posse try to set the nest alight when the red worms descended on them, tearing and burrowing into them like piranhas and wasting no shred of organ, bone, muscle, or skin. The worms devoured any of their brethren the posse crushed or burned, then split into two new worms. The fat ones that fed on the posse dropped back into the nest while the remainder chased the dwindling group.

Edward, the only person to survive the retreat, swore he saw the worms covering something, a metal skeleton larger than an elephant he said. He swore the worms were regurgitating the viscera of their victims on its structure, like they were plastering or covering it with flesh and muscles.

Unfortunately Edward is currently residing in Salt Lake City's Asylum, so he really can't authenticate any story given his questionable credibility. Thankfully, Smith & Robards believed him enough to relocate their factory elsewhere and seal up the tunnel, though they're curious about the device Edward claims to have spotted at the bottom of that worm pit.

The New Men and Women of Steam

Silus' warning of the secret movement in Salt Lake City is only the beginning of new movements and new men and women of steam. With the North and South scuffling over ghost rock claims and supply lines, little of the moaning mineral has made its way outside the Continental Americas. Still, thanks to secrets seams discovered by mercenary enterprises, German and British pirates off Shan Fan, or immigrants settling out West, ghost rock has spread to "foreigners."

Now scientists of European extraction like the Collegium's Erik Zarkov, or Clifton Robards are fairly common. In fact, the new men and women of steam are emerging among the

Chinese and Arabs, who combine ghost rock and alchemy to create a new science unfamiliar to Westerners, or the Hopi mad scientists creating automata *kachina* dolls called *Ayáwamat* ("one who follows orders"). Out in Bayou country, there are rumors the CSA is talking to practitioners of a slave religion called Voodoo, trying to convince them to create "zombies" (though again this remains a rumor). There's a movement befalling the Weird West, one where the new scientists may be following cultural obligations to create and design contraptions.

With the emergence of the Sesha, what are the ramifications of applying ghost rock to architecture? Steel refined through ghost rock is already much lighter and stronger than that refined through normal processes; what does that entail when architects are talking about building taller structures than ever before imagined?

What about ghost rock used by alchemists and chemists to manufacture stronger explosives or new materials. Truth be told, can folks even use the term mad scientist for anyone who fiddles with ghost rock?

Regardless, the shattered remnants of California are seemingly home to new and strange movements, and more are on the horizon. Take the Collegium's Dr. Marcus Perriwinkle, for instance, who's dabbling with meshing human flesh with mechanical contraptions. So far, he is one of the only two people who've succeeded. Out in Lost Angels, there's a group of scientists called the Patchwork Circle, who specialize in transplanting limbs and organs, and reanimating the dead. These scientists are currying great favor from folks with deep pockets. After all, who doesn't want to cheat death or bring back a loved one. Is immortality far behind?

The Smokers

Finally, Shan Fan is host to a new movement of alchemists calling themselves Smokers. These mad scientists use chemistry and drugs to "heighten their awareness." They call themselves modern shamans, but there's a city full of "honest citizens" who blame them for the rise in the number of opium houses across the West. People are frightened by what they don't understand, however, but the Smokers' precepts are far older than most European conventions. In fact, most Smokers have little respect for the Western Colonial juggernaut; Britain, Spain, France, even the United States, have done nothing but destroy cultures in an attempt to "civilize" them. How much knowledge has the world lost to such ignorance?

The Smokers draw upon traditions far older than most countries, mostly thanks to Ton Tzu, a gentleman of Chinese extraction, and a



believer in Taoism, among other things. Ton Tzu came to this country seeking ghost rock. As a Taoist alchemist, and advisor to the Qing Dynasty, he heard about the reputed properties of this unusually fecund mineral, and spent his fortune on the journey alone.

When Ton Tzu arrived in California, he discovered a reservoir of untapped knowledge among the other ancient cultures. The American Indians possessed an unparalleled understanding of local flora and fauna, and the use of consciousness-altering substances like peyote. Ton Tzu approached the Comanche and Navajo, learning about the Peyote religion after finding common ground through their mutual respect in nature. He later spoke with Sabian Muslims, who practiced a form of alchemy unseen since the days of ancient Egypt, and studied hermetic alchemy from European occultists.

Ton Tzu gathered disciples around him, teaching them his fusion of native animism and the Taoist search for balance and well-being. They in turn spread his words.

Many folks are uncomfortable with the Smokers' use of opium and peyote, but these are their tools in understanding the Way. The Smokers claim they open their thoughts and allow them to glimpse and comprehend the universe more clearly. Of course the Weird West is not often known for its liberal attitudes, so the Smokers also carry a gun and pipe. These are their emblems, but these items also focus their alchemy "gifts" and help identify Smokers to one another. The pipe and their practices are how the Smokers earned their name.

Ton Tzu has built a strong following in the city of Shan Fan. Many of his followers are Asian immigrants, but he also has a surprising number of Indian disciples. Of course, he also has a good number of Caucasian followers. The gang bosses that run Shan Fan have tried to enlist Tzu's help in their struggles for power, but so far he has remained aloof from the city's politics. A handful of bosses have felt insulted by his refusal to help and a small number are contemplating crushing his movement before it grow too powerful to easily control—the old if you're not with us, you're against us mentality. Tzu knows this, but is strangely undisturbed by the news.

The Consequences of Mad Science

Smokers and the new pioneers of steam often leave folks with some unsettling questions. If mad scientists are the captains of fancy, then where are they steering humanity? Perhaps more perplexing is the thought that mad scientists are now trespassing on faith's property. More inventors are dabbling with what was once God's prerogative, leading folks to wonder ... does anyone have the right to alter the flesh when people were Created in His image?

And where do they say stop and say "no more?" Do they stop when patchwork science resurrects the dead? Do they stop when Smokers try to glimpse God's face? Do they stop when mad scientists build their own angels?

Nobody really knows, but some observers are sadly noticing that when someone like Eugene Charles Clark steps up and says he has the solution, he just happens to be mad too...

NO MAN'S
LAND







CHAPTER TWO: PLAYING WITH FIRE

Playing with fire is an appropriate metaphor for mad scientists in more than one way. In fact it's three-ways precise. The inventor risks life and limb while creating devices and does so again using them. Finally, the mad scientist hazards the flames of perdition by bartering with the manitous, though truth be told, only a handful of folks have the presence of mind to recognize this risk—they go loco real quick.

Regardless, the creationist allure is often too great to ignore, so if you're about to travel down the mad scientist trail, here's a heaping help of suggestions to improve your chances of survival. Before you do, though, ask yourself...

Why in Tarnation a Mad Scientist?

When a mad scientist strolls into town, not many fellahs or gals swoon over the mysterious stranger. More likely, women close their shutters, men dash across the street to pull their younguns from your path, and cats hiss at the clanging contraptions on your back. Truth is, your ilk has a reputation for being more unhitched than your inventions. Folks figure the screws you built those contraptions with are the ones coming loose from your head.

So you still want to be a mad scientist, huh? The allure of creating a quick-draw cannon is too intoxicating to ignore? Maybe folks pushed you around when you were just a brainy kid, but now you can put that high intellect and all that learning to use. Show them you're the bigger man by blasting them to smaller pieces (bigger man ... smaller pieces ... get it? Never mind). Fact is, some scientists have a chip on their shoulder that does a hundred different things. They're out to prove something at everybody else's expense.

Maybe, you're a mad scientist because you want to improve people's lives? Sure, many mad scientists start that way, too. All they want to do is help folks, but the truth of the matter is, the only place you can start is near a steady supply of ghost rock. And in case you haven't figured it out yet, that's in the Weird West where even the tumbleweeds harbor a disliking for you. So you'll help humanity as soon as you've created enough contraptions to protect yourself from everything out there. That's the way it always starts for the Samaritans out there.

This, of course, is figuring you're not the sort of genius whose head is so full of ideas that it hurts to keep them bottled up. You're like a kid with a pile of wood and a torch. You know what fire looks like, but you have to set a blaze anyway. You don't care about the consequences as long as

you can envision and assemble things. It's all about expressing your control over the situation, and what better way to accomplish that than by playing God.

It comes down to your need to create and build contraptions for whatever reason. It might be ego, Samaritan inclinations, a real mean streak, or just plain survival. End result, though, is a hankerin' for tinkerin'; that means high Intelligence and often good learning. It also means a high Constitution, though this may be a chicken and egg situation. Do the experiments wean out the weak scientists through accidents, or simply make them hardier? The saying "that which don't kill you only makes you stronger" might just be true here.

Fact is, if mad scientists don't have a care for anyone, it's themselves. Call it bravery or foolishness, but mad scientists have one of them in excess. Why is that you ask? It's because simple folks with an inch of self-preservation aren't going to mix solutions together or build devices that explode in their faces and take out their farms. More so, it takes a special kind of bravery (or foolishness) to stand up to a salt lake rattler or wendigo with a contraption that's sputtering and wheezing like Methuselah's grandma. It takes a singular character to carry a tank of acid or Greek fire on his or her back without worrying about the consequences of a leak. In essence it takes a mad scientist to know all these risks and still tinker around with fate.



Tinkerin' 101

So you're still here. All right then, let's show you how to minimize the dangers and maximize your results, so to speak. Now you should already be familiar with the steps offered in the *Deadlands D20 Role-Playing Game*. That provides you with the basics while this offers greater details on the process, and dangers, of your intended craft.

Concoct the Theory

Well, this is pretty standard, and there's little that can be added here outside of ... use your imagination—pure science isn't an asset. It's become a medium to express fancy and not the final hurdle it once was. Take for example Lord Kelvin who thought flying machines were impossible until the Wright Brothers proved him wrong in the real world. The creation of a proper flying machine was the last obstacle to debunking science's current conventions.

Now look at the Weird West with the developments born of omni-functional ghost rock. It's no longer a matter that something's impossible, merely it hasn't been tried yet. While this fits with the pioneering, can-do spirit of the West, it also means there are no safeguards preventing folks from building something bigger, nastier, and uglier. The North and South need weapons of mass destruction to end the war in their favor, and it means they're likelier to permit weapons bordering on the horrifying as long as they control it.

Premonitory Nightmares: Sadly, ghost rock thrives off the misery it fosters, and the universe has a way of punishing folks for their ill-conceived contributions. One option to reflect this is anytime the scientist devises a gizmo that will cause much suffering (like a chlorine bomb that affects an entire town, for instance, or a weather machine that spits out sulfuric rain clouds) the Marshal can dictate the inventor suffers from premonitory nightmares. These bad dreams leave the inventor shiftless, troubled, and tired, increasing the character's vulnerability to Dementia by +2. That means anytime the scientist rolls a 1, 2, or 3 on the blueprint or construction roll for that specific devise, the character gains a Dementia.

Devise the Blueprint

Again, devising a blueprint is a straightforward venture, though there are some additional options to consider. Few scientists take the time to devise blueprints just to abandon them afterwards. Many adjust and tweak their working designs, improving their contraptions with newer models. Others discovered a thriving black market for working schematics, and often sell their blueprints for some hefty dinero.

The Collegium and Smith & Robards are the two largest buyers for blueprints providing the scientist proves the device works or doesn't

mind waiting while these two organizations build and test the contraptions first. Additionally, the Yanks and Rebs use the Agency and Texas Rangers, respectively, to purchase blueprints surreptitiously. The assault on Washington proved that scientists forced to work against their will provided substandard material. Now both sides are more willing to buy blueprints and leave the tinkering to patriotic scientists.

Oh, in case you're wondering, folks generally buy blueprints for \$100 to \$500 dollars, though there is a booming barter's market. In the Weird West, where supplies are few, many inventors sell their blueprints for a variety of considerations, from lab equipment to a much needed part. Woe betide the fool selling the same blueprints to more than one party, though. The purchase assumes exclusive proprietorship and many folks enforce that assumption at gunpoint.

Waste Not, Want Not: Mad scientists are a frugal bunch, and that includes reusing their blueprints to improve existing contraptions or building new ones using portions of old schematics. Every time the scientist successfully builds a working device from a set of blueprints, she gains a +2 bonus to the relevant Knowledge roll when using the same blueprints to build new devices or repair old ones. If, at any time, the scientist rolls a 1 while using the blueprints (regardless how many times it worked before), that schematic loses all accumulated bonuses.

Working off Someone's Blueprints:

Reading someone else's chicken scrawl is hard enough, but when that scrawl concerns notations and formulae that don't make a shred of scientific sense, it becomes a problem. Reading blueprints that don't belong to you requires studying the schematics for one hour per 2 DC of the device on paper. If you're rushed to build the device before properly acclimating yourself to the blueprints, then tack on +10 to the gizmo's DC.

Gather the Components

This step is fine and dandy if you're in a big city where apothecaries, chemists, and machine shops abound. Unfortunately, living in the Weird West precludes such luxuries unless you're orbiting Virginia City, Shan Fan, or Salt Lake City. Even then, that doesn't guarantee your supplier has an aetheric pump or portable coke furnace. The solution then is to scavenge what you can, and that requires a certain finesse best discussed under New Feats a little ways later (ah heck, if you can't wait, flip to *Scavenge Items* on page 30 for more advice).

Artificers: The Weird West does have an abundance of smithies rapidly becoming good friends with mad scientists. Calling themselves "artificers," they've abandoned fashioning horseshoes and nails, and are instead specializing in contract work using ghost rock in their forge. One-Arm Cannon Slade out in Virginia City and the Collegium's Tiny Titan Harriet are two of the best known artificers out there. Railyards also employ their fair share of smithies to forge train plating. For specialty

requests, like a furnace housing, or ornithopter plating, the artificer rolls on Crafts (Blacksmithing) against an appropriate DC (see the *Player's Handbook*, page 66). For every two degrees of success over the Difficulty Class, the plating either imparts +1 Armor Bonus to the device or improves the inventor's Construct the Device roll by +1. Otherwise, the Marshal can simply rule the contraption gains the appropriate hardness based on the material used, but at half the usual weight for such a contraption (see the *Player's Handbook*, page 136).

Grades of Ghost Rock: That's right, all ghost rock isn't created the same. Just as there are different types of manitous, there are different grades of this mysterious mineral. If you haven't heard about it yet, however, it's because most ghost rock is the same. The rare veins cropping up occasionally are well kept secrets thanks to the Agency and Texas Rangers who are trying to stockpile the good stuff for their governments, or unscrupulous mining foremen looking to make some profit on the side. Let's take a look:

1) Californite constitutes 95% of the ghost rock out there, and was the first type discovered following the Great Quake. Scientists estimate it heats at over 80,000 BTUs (British thermal units per pound, a standard for coal; each unit raises the water temperature of one pound by one degree Fahrenheit). It's also a slow burner, taking years to finally expend all its energy.

2) Gamorrite takes its name from the city of Gamorra. The infamous and inbred Whateleys, consorts of the manitous themselves, control the only mine with Gamorrite, but their selling price (to a select few) is nothing short of folly. Money don't mean nothing to them, which either means they're interested in the destructive capacity of your device, or they have a favor to ask of you. If that's the case ... run; the price is already too high. Gamorrite contains red streaks and practically vaporizes when it's burnt. The result is a vapor called red phlogiston that's so thick, it clings to surfaces and feels like a spider's web to the touch. Its properties, however, effectively supercharge the gizmo in question, doubling its effectiveness (x2 damage, speed, range, or any other aspect of measurable output). Each gram of pre-expended Gamorrite equals 12 charges or uses of the device. Unfortunately, it also hampers the item's Reliability by -2 (meaning a contraption that backfires on rolls of 1 or 2 now screws up on rolls of 1 through 4).



3) K-213 is the Confederate code for a strain of ghost rock they've recently uncovered in Arizona. I say strain because Confederates are still unsure whether to characterize K-213 as a mineral or bacteria. The long and short of it is, this brand of ghost rock grows like a fungus if left unchecked, like through burning. Confederates figure they might have themselves a replenishing energy source—if only the damn thing was safe for handling. K-213 grows on exposed skin like consumption, burrowing into the flesh and penetrating arteries and veins. When mineral particles reach the brain, the infected become damn geniuses and their synaptic activity shoots through the roof. Then they go south fast, turning into rabid beasts in a matter of a week. Most often, the Confederates kill them off first, but in the few they've left living, the K-213 in their blood calcifies their joints and organs, turning them into stone like Medusa's lingering gaze. Still, that hasn't stopped the

Confederacy from using it on some scientists to augment their tinkering potential (Marshal, these folks have a +20 roll against any skill related DC involving Intelligence. The downside is that there ain't no cure, and that includes spells).

4) Ghost Ice hasn't been discovered yet (lookie here Marshal, an adventure idea), but when it is, it could spell a heap of trouble for everyone involved. In 1867, the Russians were looking to sell the territory of Alaska, but the war-beleaguered Union could ill-afford the asking price of seven million dollars. When folks discovered ghost rock in California a year later, Russia held on to the territory as its foothold in the Americas. Russian geologists have been searching the territory since, but haven't uncovered ghost rock. What Alaska possesses is ghost ice, a nonflammable variant that never absorbs heat and acts as a superconductor. It's the ultimate coolant and electrical medium. Mad scientists can start working on new avenues of technology with this mineral ... if the Russians don't uncover the ghost ice first. That said, some prospectors operating illegally in Alaska discovered a ghost ice vein, and are looking to share their secret with the Union for a couple of million dollars. The Union's currently stalling the prospectors so they can't approach the Brits or Russians with the same deal. They need someone to locate the prospectors and their claim, and hush them up while the Union negotiates to buy Alaska from the Russians without seeming desperate.

Construct the Device

Blueprints are often important to figuring out what special consideration the scientist needs to complete the work. More importantly it tells her what components she should have on hand to build the device. It's like making music. You want to be sure all the instruments are in place before beginning the hoe down; it don't work if you play a few notes on the banjo before running off to find a fiddle.

Mad scientists are musicians; they like to have all their pieces ready so they can build without the nuisance of interruption. In fact, a scientist who didn't plan far enough and has parts missing during construction suffers -2 to his final DC on constructing the device for every delay over a day. Guess what hoss, the penalties are cumulative, so don't take too long on those powder room breaks.

Cooperative Ventures: Some scientists have the benefit of working with others on mutual endeavors—just ask Smith and Robards. Too many cooks spoil the broth, though, so this only works if one person is the project head and divvies up the labor. Before the leader makes the standard Tinkerin' roll (see Gizmo

Construction Table, in the *Deadlands D20* book) the Marshal rolls for each assistant's Tinkerin' skill (DC 10). Each success gives the chief scientist a +2 bonus against their Tinkerin' DC, while each failure penalizes the group effort by -2.

Incorporating Relics: While this seems a mite foolish to some folks, it sometimes happens that an inventor finds a piece of equipment and isn't aware of its full properties, as in the case of some relics. Instead, he happily slaps the relic into the contraption, creating something different than intended. First off, the relic effectively takes over the device, turning it into a magical construct. This means it imparts a +5 bonus to Tinkerin' checks when building the item.

Upon completion, however, the relic now infuses the device with some of its mojo, changing its function somehow (Marshal's discretion). If the relic bestowed combat bonuses, for example, those now apply to the device's offensive capabilities; if it didn't have the latter before, however, it does now. Secondly, the Marshal can rule that the relic's taint has one of three effects: 1) It tacks on -1 to -3 to the item's Reliability; 2) It increases the severity of Malfunctions by one degree; or 3) The taint becomes the Malfunction result.

Lastly, mad scientists can only transplant components from one relic into a device. If components from two or more relics find their way into a contraption, it fails to work. Conversely, the more parts an inventor uses from a single relic, the more powerful it becomes, either mirroring the relic's powers fully or becoming easier to build and fall apart (+5 to +15 on Tinkerin' DCs and -5 on Reliability).

Laboratories & Libraries: For every invention, there's a hole someplace where the inventor does his tinkering. For most folks it's a covered wagon or cave, but some scientists working under the august Smith & Robards or at Fort 51 operate in dedicated workshops and libraries that would shame the most prestigious New England universities. While scientists build most contraptions on grit and vision, a good laboratory and library is a must if you want to shave some danger from the process; and who wouldn't want fewer risks. After all, mad scientist doesn't mean suicidal squirrel bait—most of the time.

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Rent-a-Lab: Face it, sometimes the Weird West isn't conducive to the enterprising spirit, and for some reason, you don't have access to a work area. Did the mother of all gremlins gobble up your last laboratory? Or on hindsight, maybe building a walking automaton trollop with flamethrowers for eyes wasn't such a good idea. No matter, you don't have a laboratory anymore, but there's still a host of smithies and entrepreneurs willing to rent out their establishment and equipment for your tinkerin' pleasure. Most charge straight dinero, from \$20 a week for the "Basic Materials," to \$100 a week for the "Medium Lab" setup. That doesn't count extra expenses like used supplies and damage to the premises, and most places don't know enough to provide everything the scientist needs. Operating in these makeshift labs incurs a -5 to Blueprint or Construction checks if the scientist can't provide for his own materials.

Ready for mass market: Folks say each mad scientist imparts some of her personality into the invention, which is one reason why mass marketing devices is troublesome at best. Some items, however, are proving easier to "bulk produce" like Gatling pistols, so here's a little rule of thumb on what can or can't be manufactured using the assembly line mentality. Look at the Gizmo Construction Table (I'll wait while you flip to page 116 in the *Deadlands D20* book).

Any small or hand-held device considered a slight to major improvement on existing technology (essentially anything under DC 20) can be mass-produced. Now I bet you're wondering why some of it hasn't been churned out yet? It's because 1) demand creates supply, 2) the Union and Confederates are mighty picky about which cats they let out of the bag, and 3) mass-produced items are less reliable. Their Reliability Score decreases by -1 for every 5 DC ascribed to building the device after DC 5 (-1 at DC 10, -2 at DC 15, -3 at DC 20, -4 at DC 25, etc.). So items constructed with a base target of 15 DC, like a faster printing press, has its Reliability Score decreased by -2.

Labs

Laboratory/Research Materials

	Effect	Space	Cost
None	-5 to blueprint roll	None	\$0
Basic Materials (important reference books, slide rules, beakers, etc.)	None	Carpet bag	\$100
Small Lab (work bench, small library, chemistry set, bunsen burners, etc.)	+5 to blueprint roll	Small wagon	\$500
Medium Lab (medium library, work benches, storage room, hoists and pulleys)	+10 to blueprint roll	Barn loft	\$2000
Large Lab (extensive library, work stations, test facilities, equipment racks, etc.)	+15 to blueprint roll	Building	\$5000

Alchemy 101

Folks may not realize this, but alchemy's the original craft of mad scientists. Before da Vinci dabbled in mechanics or Babbage developed the analytical machine, alchemists all over the world were already mixing chemistry and mysticism into a pseudo-science.

In Egyptian times, under the rule of the Greek Ptolemy Dynasty, the cult of Hermes Trismegistus (Greco-Egyptian alchemy) flourished. This marriage of the gods Thoth and Hermes formed the basis of Hermetic magics later, influencing such notables as Roger Bacon and Albertus Magnus. What folks overlook is that Bacon and Magnus only inherited traditions handed down from figures like Bolus of Mendes and the enigmatic Maria the Jew, who first developed alchemical practices later refined under the Hermetics.

Of course Western perceptions of alchemy always filch the thunder from the Muslim Sabians of Harran, who preserved the undiluted Greco-Egyptian processes, or the Taoist practitioners who sought out immortality (among other powers).

The fact is alchemy is almost as old as the wheel; if the different cultures practicing it share anything in common, it's an attempt at spiritual purification. That's not to say everyone's all good intentioned about this ancient tradition.

Many folks pursue it for power or wealth, and with the discovery of ghost rock, more alchemists than ever are suddenly proficient at concocting success. One difference does remain, however, between alchemists and mad scientists proper: faith.

Mad science, as currently defined, is an enterprise of determination and imagination. It stems from purely scientific principles (from plausible to the downright loco), and is significant only to further or contest the presumed laws of physics. Ask a mountaineer why she'd scale the mountain, and she'll say "because it's there." Mad scientists are like that; they often invent something to prove they can.

Many alchemists, however, throw a pinch of faith into their formulas. Their discipline errs on the side of magic, and no magician practices their craft without believing in *something*. The Taoists trust in a fluid cosmos brought about through the dynamic of opposing forces, like yin and yang, while the Sabians of Harran and even Sufi mystics practicing "internal alchemy" follow Allah. Hermetics believe in a variety of spirits attached to various planets and elements, though many also believe in God.

All that lecturing said, Marshals can create alchemists whose only interest is in exploring a different type of chemistry, and fabricating legendary elixirs like the Midas Touch and the universal solvent. Other alchemists, however, who might be looking to create magical effects, follow an entirely different set of beliefs than what the Weird West is used to seeing. Just how they accomplish this deed is as easy as the following steps.

Spiritpunk

A Hopi inventor by the name of Luke Wikvaya is turning science on its ears by building contraptions based on cultural standards rather than the hard disciplines of chemistry and engineering. He, and the tribal scientists sure to follow, applies the principle that each object or item carries an attached spirit or property, which infuses the contraption with the necessary power. Corn, for example, is the life giver and often the device's power source when combined with ghost rock; the eagle feather represents the messenger of the gods, and might serve as a remote control to guide contraption.

Therefore, each device is an amalgamation of characteristics through components found in the natural world, and is far more organic/tribal in appearance. Once the pieces are put together, they act in a sort of symbiotic harmony, bringing the invention "to life."

Wikvaya's methodology is akin to the Prestige Class of alchemists, the Smokers, listed at the end of this Chapter. The only difference, however, is that tribal mad scientists have the Shaman Feat Favor at 1st Level instead of Starting Elixir. In this case, however, the Favor does not offer Wikvaya and his acolytes spells; instead it animates the contraption's properties, allowing the spirits to coexist and function in unison.

Elixirs

The general term for any alchemists' creation is elixir, even though some are liquid while others are in powder, gaseous, cream, or pill form. Additionally, an alchemist activates the elixir's properties by either drinking it (or forcing someone else to), inhaling it, applying it to (or pouring it over) a surface, or smashing the container. The elixir's state and delivery vector vary, but the alchemist must define them before brewing the formula.

The first caveat for elixirs is that they aren't *carte blanche* to go all willy-nilly with powers. No potion allows you to burst folks into flame on a whim, or shoot lightning out your keister. First off, the elixir must affect the alchemist physically (greater Strength or Dexterity, the ability to see in the dark, grow bristles, turn skin into armor, etc.). Secondly, if alchemist wants to affect someone, or something, else, they have to apply the elixir to them *directly*. If you trick them into drinking the brown water, fine; if you throw a bottle of Greek Fire at them and it explodes, fine again. If you rub lotion on their body while they're asleep ... aside from a few personal issues, that's still fine. No death-ray vision or turning folks into stone possums with a song.

The second caveat on ingested elixirs is that they can't affect Harrowed, unless specifically designed with this purpose in mind. Alchemists looking to design elixirs for Harrowed to imbibe or inhale (good or bad) must use twice the

quantity of philosopher's stone (see the Philosopher's Stone section for more information) to be effective. This also means the concoction is less potent against the living, incurring a penalty of -5 to Reliability (a Reliability of 1 becomes a 6).

Using Elixirs

As a rule of thumb, folks can swallow one dose of a liquid or pill elixir in one action. Creams require 1d4 rounds (or actions) to cover the required area of a human-sized target (+1d6 rounds for every increase in Size). Impact elixirs are essentially thrown weapons and use the Grenadelike Weapon Attacks rules from the *Player's Handbook* (page 138).

Elixirs have the following characteristics:

Effect is just that, the outcome of using the elixir.

Duration indicates how long the potion's effects last.

Reliability means when and how the elixir backfires, and to what embarrassing degree.

Speed indicates just how quickly an elixir activates. For one round, roll 1d6 to determine when it takes effect. For one minute roll 1d10 to determine the round (since a round is 6 seconds, 10 rounds equals one minute). For an hour or more, the Marshal makes the call.

Mixing and Matching Potions

Chances are, at some point an alchemist is going to apply an elixir while another one is still in effect, or use multiple doses. Not the wisest idea; alchemy is all about finding that delicate balance of compounds to work together safely without them exploding in your gullet. Adding elixirs together, or increasing their dosage could create unforeseen and volatile mixtures.

For every additional elixir or dosage the alchemist takes, including the already active compound, the concoctions' Reliabilities drop by 1. Not only that, but the alchemist must now reroll each elixir's Reliability on a d20, taking into account the penalties. Therefore, if the alchemist drinks Owl Eye Tonic, when Sampson's Elixir is already active, she must roll for both concoctions' Reliability with a penalty of -2 (Owl Eye, which has a Reliability of 1, now has a 3, while Sampson's Reliability jumps from 2 to 4). If the alchemist drinks a dose of Soul Sight, the Reliabilities now suffer a penalty of -3, with the character making three new Reliability rolls.

Philosopher's Stone

This has long been one of alchemy's grails. It's a kind of universal catalyst that allows alchemists to change what they have into what they need. Thanks to the discovery of ghost rock, it's now readily available to anyone with the skills to manufacture it.

Creating the philosopher's stone takes some effort, and is the most crucial step in concocting elixirs. Thankfully, it takes far less space and materials to create elixirs than build contraptions, and the only things the alchemist really needs are some ghost rock, a crucible, a mortar and pestle, a knife, and hot fire.

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Philosopher Stone

- | Step | Action |
|------|--|
| 1 | Use the mortar and pestle to crush the ghost rock into powder. An ounce of ghost rock equals an ounce of the philosopher's stone. |
| 2 | Pour the powder into the crucible and heat for 10 minutes. Don't touch the open flame, or you'll affect its purity and the formula automatically fails. |
| 3 | Mix your blood with the ghost rock (again, one ounce for an ounce). The alchemist suffers 1d6 Subdual Damage for each ounce sacrificed, regaining it after 24 hours. |
| 4 | Keep in the crucible for one hour per ounce of stone being created. Make an Alchemy skill check (DC15). A success creates a blood red stone, known as the philosopher's stone. Failure generates a goop of sludge. |





Creating Elixirs

Creating elixirs follows an established set of steps, like tinkering, to simplify matters. They are:

1. Devise a formula.
2. Determine the ingredients.
3. Concoct the elixir.

Now, you've probably noticed that the "Concoct a Theory" is missing from these three here steps. That's because alchemists operate off tried and true sets of formulas and processes, while mad scientists and their methodologies are fairly new. In many ways, alchemy's the wheel that's already been invented, and now folks are simply introducing new spokes to it. Alchemists are also like cooks in that they experiment by throwing in a ton of ingredients into the mixture, sampling and tinkering as they go along. They don't need to concoct theories.

Devise a Formula

This is where the scientist fixates on an idea, and starts the process by mixing ingredients and poring over manuscripts and texts to find the right combination of materials. This is also where the player tells the Marshal his ambitions for the elixir, including its state (powder, liquid, etc.), effects, and vector-type (imbibed, coating, impact, etc.).

Once the Marshal feels the alchemist has a solid idea of the elixir's function, the player makes an Alchemy skill check (DC 5) to determine whether all this tinkering and formulating was in vain. Success means the alchemist devised a working formula, turning every 5 points over the target DC into a +2 bonus on his final creation attempt (therefore, if the alchemist rolled a 15, he beats the DC by +10, and gains a +4 bonus to concocting the elixir itself).

Failure, of course, means the alchemist spent half the required research time in vain (consult the Elixirs Table: Research Time, for how long this entails based on the alchemist's chemical ambitions). Rolling a 1 means the unlucky alchemist just earned himself a brand spankin' new Dementia.

Determine the Ingredients

Rather than bore you with a potential list of chemicals, metals, plants, and minerals necessary to concocting an elixir, we've divvied them up into four basic classes: Common (C), uncommon (U), rare (R), exotic (E). Just as a suggestion on the Elixirs Table, we've also included an Ingredients column with a list of component classes and quantities that the alchemist might require while concocting that formula. Therefore if the column says 4C/3U/2R/1E, it means the formula requires 4 Common ingredients (4C), 3 Uncommon components (3U), 2 Rare ingredients (2R), and 1 Exotic item (1E). This doesn't mean these are the only components required for the formula, but they are essential and not in the alchemist's possession.

Common ingredients run five cents per ounce and include materials found in the local trading outpost or general store like baking soda, salt, and alcohol. Otherwise they might include components easily found in the wilds like spiders and crickets.

Uncommon ingredients run at about \$1 per ounce, and are mostly available at druggists, doctors, or chemical supply houses. These ingredients might include laudanum, silver nitrate, arsenic, and cyanide.

Rare items cost about \$10 an ounce, and are found at supply houses or other specialty stores. The key consideration here is that they're expensive and somewhat hard to come by. These items include ghost rock, gold, silver, or cinnabar.

Exotic materials can run anywhere from \$100 to \$1000 an ounce, and are only available if the alchemist deals with a collector/hunter, or goes after the ingredient himself. Such components might include powdered rattler tentacle, the eyeball of a Harrowed individual, water from Old Faithful, etc.

Thanks to the difficulty of obtaining exotic materials, the Marshal can forego that elixir requirement. These types of quest should be significant to the story and not some throwaway potential.

The final step in preparing the ingredients is adding the proper amount of philosopher's stone as indicated on the Elixirs Table (obviously depending on the concoction in question).

Concoct the Elixir

Once everything's in place, the alchemist can start the brewing process to create the elixir (as indicated under the Brew Time column of the Elixirs Table). Only after completing the brew time and expending the ingredients does the alchemist make an Alchemy skill check against the elixir's DC to determine the outcome (don't forget any bonuses for the Devise a Formula portion of the process).

If the process succeeds, the alchemist creates one dose plus an additional dose for every 5 points rolled over the elixir's DC. If he failed, he loses the time, effort, and components (which is

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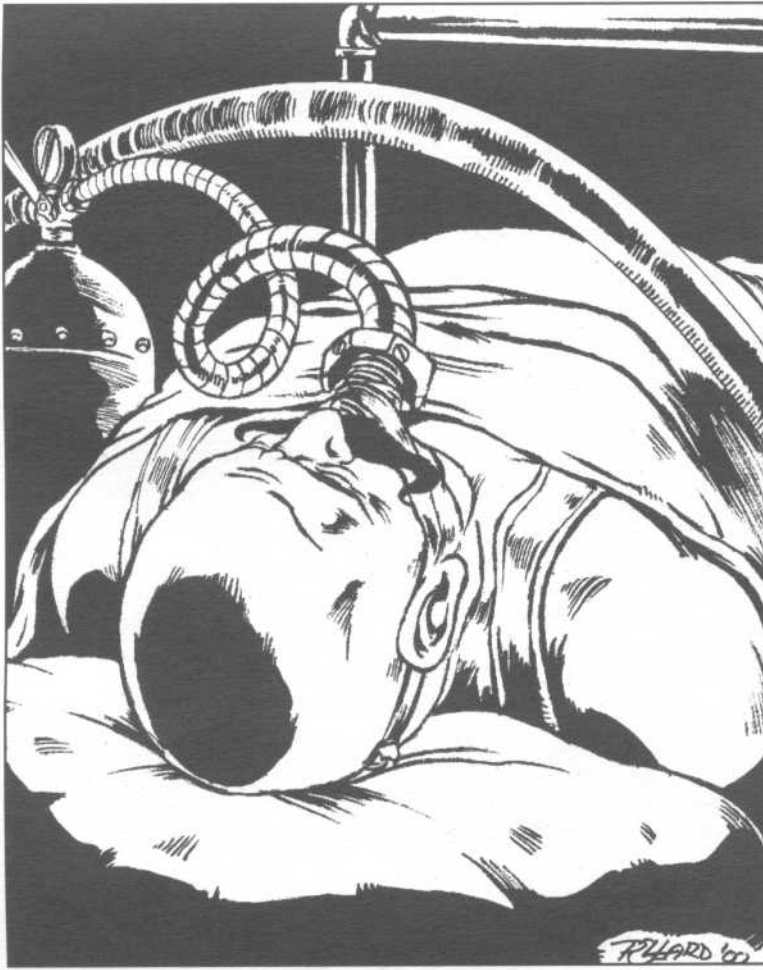
why alchemists normally buy more ingredients than actually necessary). He must start over again from scratch.

The base Reliability for elixirs is 10. For every point the player rolls above the DC, the Reliability improves by +1 to a maximum Reliability of 1. A roll of 15 against a DC of 10, for instance, results in an elixir with a Reliability of 5. Since alchemy—and mad science in general—is an inexact science, an alchemist must roll for each new batch of the elixir he wishes to create. Variability in ingredients and brewing conditions may result in the same formula having a different reliability each time it is concocted.

Example: Bob's alchemist wants to make an elixir that heals 2d6 damage. Looking on the Elixir Table, he sees

Elixirs

DC	Research Time	Brew Time	Ingredients (Suggested)	Philosopher's Stone	Description
10	10-60 minutes	1d4 hours	3C/2U	1d4 ounces	Heals or Causes 1d4, +1 modifier to specific saving throw
15	1-10 hours	1d6 hours	3C/3U	1d4 ounces	Heals or Causes 1d6, +2 modifier to specific saving throw, induces sleep (affects 1d4 HD, Fortitude save negates)
20	1-4 days	1d8 hours	3C/3U/1R	1d6 ounces	Heals or Causes 2d6, +3 modifier to specific Saving Throw, induces sleep (affects 2d4 HD, Fortitude Save negates), grants spell-like abilities (Level 1)
25	2-12 days	1d10 hours	4C/3U/2R	1d6 ounces	Heals or Causes 2d8, +4 modifier to specific Saving Throw, induces sleep (affects 2d6 HD, Fortitude Save negates), grants spell-like abilities (Level 2)
30	1-4 weeks	1d12 hours	4C/3U/3R	1d8 ounces	Heals or Causes 2d10, +5 modifier to specific Saving Throw, induces sleep (affects 2d8 HD, Fortitude Save negates), grants spell-like abilities (Level 3)
35	1-6 months	1d20 hours	5C/4U/3R	1d8 ounces	Heals or Causes 3d10, raises or lowers Ability scores by 1 (max 18), induces sleep (affects 2d10 HD, Fortitude Save negates), grants spell-like abilities (Level 4)
40	1-12 months	1d4 days	5C/4U/3R/1E	1d10 ounces	Heals or Causes 4d10, raises or lowers Ability scores by 2 (max 19), induces sleep (affects 2d10+2 HD, Fortitude Save negates), grants spell-like abilities (Level 5)
45	1-4 years	1d6 days	5C/5U/4R/1E	1d10 ounces	Heals or Causes 5d10, raises or lowers Ability scores by 3 (max 20), induces sleep (affects 3d10 HD, Fortitude Save negates), grants spell-like abilities (Level 6)
50	1-20 years	1d8 days	6C/6U/4R/2E	1d12 ounces	Heals all damage, kills instantly, restores life to recently deceased, transmutation of elements, raises or lowers Ability scores by 4 (max 21)



Messin' With Dead Folks 101

So you want to mess with dead folks. Aside from a heap of laws prohibiting that kind of behavior, it's just plain immoral, and a fine touch sick. Still interested? Well, there isn't much to pulling a Frankenstein and sewing a few bodies together. Actually, the preferred term among mad scientists peddling in dead flesh is Patchwork Science. Now just a word of warning: Nobody who calls themselves a hero should be mucking around with dead bodies. It's impolite and contrary to all the natural laws of the world. Even mad scientists have their limits, and most draw the line at mutilating corpses.

In other words, the Marshal should treat these folks as NPCs, and prohibit the players from choosing this route. As such, the entire process of creating a patchwork monster is left to the Marshal's fancy, but it is fairly straightforward. The Marshal can use a biological approach to the mad scientist formula of:

- 1) Create an Anatomical Blueprint
- 2) Find the Best Body Parts (from dead or kidnapped victims)
- 3) Build the Creature (one part brain, one part high voltage).

That said, Patchwork Science is new to society. Oh sure, a heap of sinister sorcerers and misguided magicians have tried pulling a Lazarus on their dearly departed, but few folks actually considered piecing together body parts for the purpose of creating, err, recycling life—at least not until the manitous reared their ugly heads.

That's not to say the manitous made things simple. In fact they forced folks to work for their accomplishments. Why? Because most folks don't just start off saying: "Hey, I think I'm going build me a new husband—using the best parts from all my old beaus." It starts slowly, perhaps with a need to replace a severed limb, or keep an infirm loved one alive. Slowly, the experiments on body parts become easier. If you're willing to rob a grave for a hand, why not an arm or a leg? Heck, once you're willing to steal a dead hand, why not lop off someone's living, fresh hand instead; most folks have two and nary the sense to use one properly anyway. After that, each exercise into depravity makes the next step easier, and manitous want to reward those folks willing to follow through the various steps.

The first person to reach this level of depravity was Dr. Wilma Meister. Until that point, other patchwork scientists managed to sew together pigeon-rats, but more complex creatures suffered from one major problem. They couldn't control their replacement limbs. At best they could bite, hiss, and spit. Dr. Wilma Meister, on the other hand, discovered the grail of her craft.

that requires 1 to 4 days of research time. His marshal rolls a 2, so after two days of research, he makes an Alchemy check against a DC of 5. Bob rolls a 16. This gives him a +4 bonus when it comes time to whip up the elixir itself. To do this, he needs to locate and purchase 3 Common, 3 Uncommon, and 1 Rare ingredient. He also needs 1d6 ounces of philosopher's stone.

Once Bob's hero has gathered all of his components together, it's time to actually brew up this goop. The actual time this takes for the elixir he is attempting is 1d8 hours. He rolls a 5. So, after five hours have passed, Bob makes another Alchemy check and adds +4 for his earlier success at devising the formula. He gets a total of 26. Since the DC for making the elixir was only 20, his roll nets him two complete doses. Rolling 6 points above the DC means each dose has a Reliability of 4 (10-6).

Dr. Meister, while studying an amalgam creature called a 'glom (an agglomeration of dead soldiers), discovered that the brain was key. Most experiments used intact brains from abduct... volunteers, but it still wasn't enough. Each replacement limb or part had to include a portion of the same brain to function as a whole. Once brain slivers were surgically implanted in the replacement parts and reanimated with electricity, the creature lived—so to speak. The different parts, regardless of the species, functioned as a whole.

Of course there are three caveats to the process. 1) Despite science's insistence otherwise, the creation is undead, Harrowed. 2) This process does not work on grafting new body parts onto living subjects. The person being grafted must be dead, which defeats the purpose of limb replacement, but that still hasn't stopped folks from experimenting in all manner of patchwork science. Finally, 3) the patchwork creature is harder to kill because it has multiple brains, one for each replacement part. Use three different body parts, and the creature has three brains working in tandem. That means to destroy these critters, the heroes must locate and obliterate each brain.

The Implements of the Trade

Before the patchwork scientist can begin, here are a few considerations to worry about. First off, she needs Knowledge (Biology) and Mad Science to understand how the body works, and how to create an amalgam creature. Additionally, Heal and Handle Animal are useful for suturing the body parts together properly (or the body will fall apart) and managing panicked animals. Some flesh tinkerers even develop an eye for Appraisal and identifying the choice body parts for their experiments.

Unlike mad scientists who can slapdash contraptions together practically anywhere, patchwork scientists work in a dedicated facility. This is where they house their surgical implements, animal/human pens (for parts and experimentation), operating tables with reinforced straps, and a ghost-rock dynamo to reanimate the dead limbs. Patchworking also requires dinero, or a rich patron, because body parts can run from \$50 to \$100 dollars apiece (or even \$1000 for unusual creatures like a Wall Crawler claw or Devil Bat wings). That's why most patchwork scientists find themselves an isolated piece of real estate near a graveyard or population center. They also make for poor adventurers and conversationalists since they spend most of their day in their labs, working on corpses. Understandably, that puts some folks off.

Bearing this in mind, the patchwork scientist can cobble together almost any kind of creature, creating all new breeds of monsters. Each replacement also carries the abilities of the animal or critter; give a patchwork a pair of cat's eyes, and it can see in the dark. Give it spikes and claws, and it's capable of defending itself. Give it the muscles of a bear, and it becomes stronger and tougher. That's right, limb

replacement can also include organs and muscles. In fact, because the creature is harrowed, it needs a stomach to consume and replenish itself.

Being a patchwork scientist isn't about slapping body parts together; it's about taking anatomical concerns into consideration. The critter needs a brain to learn (or remember their identities), a stomach to process food, and a heart to imprint itself on someone. (The first person the creature sees is effectively daddy. If it has a heart; otherwise it's a cold, remorseless beast).

Of final note, patchwork scientists can augment Harrowed characters, boosting their preternatural abilities. Harrowed heroes should avoid this, however, since it gives the manitou greater Dominion over the hero's body (anywhere from +3 to +8, at the Marshal's discretion).

New Feats

Here are some new feats to make your mad inventor a bit more potent.

Chemist's Stock (Alchemy) [Special]

Alchemy's been likened to cooking for more than one reason. Eventually the alchemist finds herself in possession of leftover ingredients much like a seasoned cook has a surfeit of spices from the hundreds of meals he's prepared: a pinch of sulfur in one vial, potassium cyanide in another, powdered spiders in a pouch, or ghost rock in a hankie. It isn't much, but it adds up, meaning sometimes the alchemist doesn't need to hunt after every ingredient required for the elixir. Sometimes he just might have them squirreled away.

Prerequisite: At least five skill ranks in Alchemy. That indicates the alchemist has been dabbling long enough to acquire a small chemical supply stock.

Benefit: To begin with, this feat saves Marshal and player alike from micromanaging the different ingredients purchased and used along the way. Instead, either the alchemist has the necessary components for an elixir or he does not. For each class of ingredient required (as indicated on the Elixirs Table: Common, Uncommon, Rare, and Exotic), the alchemist makes one Alchemy skill check against varying DCs (Common: DC 10, Uncommon: DC 20, Rare: DC 30, Exotic: DC 40). This doesn't indicate luck so much, but the alchemist's frugal nature and better understanding on how to maximize certain results with the minimum ingredient quantity required (which is why she may have more). If successful, the alchemist has one component already for that class.



Special: Having this feat multiple times allows the inventor to make one additional roll per class of ingredient required.

Reverse Engineering (Mad Science) [Special]

So you've found yourself a colorful little gadget with blinking lights and clanking pistons, and you want to know how it works so you can build one of your own. That's what we call reverse engineering. It's like biology 101 where you fiddle around with a worm's innards to figure out what makes it tick. Only once mad scientists reason out the worm, they can build a new one.

Prerequisite: It goes without saying the mad scientist needs Tinkerin' (Int) and the Knowledge type relevant to deconstructing the device (like Engineering for most contraptions, or Biology for the groaning type of creations, or Meteorology for rainmaking doohickeys, etc.). The scientist also needs Alchemy if she hopes to understand strange and chemical-based inventions.

Benefit: This Feat allows mad scientists to understand how an invention works by rolling against the original Difficulty Class (-5) that created it in the first place. For example, if a scientist built a Gatling pistol by beating DC 20, another scientist can tear it apart and figure out how it works by making a Tinkerin' roll against DC15. If he fails, both the invention and the opportunity to understand it are gone. If the mad scientist has a blueprint of the device handy as well, remove another 5 from the DC to Reverse Engineer. After that, the mad scientist can now go through the process of rebuilding a new device with a +10 bonus to his Tinkerin' roll.

Normal: Mad scientists without this Feat might as well be Neanderthals trying to crack a rock open with another rock. It requires a certain finesse to unravel another scientist's secrets, especially secrets born of fancy and imagination.

Scavenge Items [General]

Where exactly did the first mad scientists find an aetheric pump or grooved piston when they hadn't been built yet? They scavenged items wherever they could find them, turning innocent looking utensils and pottery into the chambers for their weapons. At a more basic level, the Hopi inventors build their devices from whatever they unearth around them. Wooden cogs, cactus fiber for string, hide containers for pumps, sharpened quartz for buckshot, and a touch o' alchemy to turn their brand of plaster mud into a type of strong cement. Mind you, that's not to imply the Hopi are primitives without any technological savvy. They, along with most Pueblo Indians like the Diné, learnt silversmithing from the Mexicans around the 1850s.

Anyway, many mad scientists took notice of these little tricks, thus accounting for this Feat. Scavenge Items allows the mad scientist to forage warbags, the wilderness, or a trading outpost to find suitable substitutes for hard-to-find components. Why ask a smithy for a steel cog when a wooden dish serrated at the edges will do in a crunch? Or why bother with silk when cactus fibers are good for suturing?

Prerequisite: The mad scientist needs a combination of Tinkerin' and Search skills to carry off this feat.

Benefit: This Feat is Jury Rig in effect, except it applies to the construction of the device when time is of the essence, or the mad scientist isn't patient enough to wait for that Acme delivery. The scientist must succeed at a Search skill check (DC 15) to find the necessary items, and the necessary Knowledge skill check (DC15) to adapt them to his needs. This process takes an hour for the tandem Search and Knowledge attempt. Fail one, and there goes another precious hour of your time. That said, the scavenged item is rarely up to snuff, and only lasts for 2d8 uses or minutes. The component then breaks down, necessitating a Jury Rig roll on Tinkerin' to replace the part or make it operational for 1d4 more times/minutes. If the item fails its Reliability roll, Marshals should treat it as either a Major or Catastrophic Malfunction.

Normal: Without this Feat, most mad scientists are stuck ordering parts, building components themselves, or contracting artificers to fit the bill, which may require days, if not weeks to receive the needed piece.

Scratch-Build (Mad Science) [Special]

So you're caught in a tight spot with big rattlers circling slowly, waiting for you to slip up. That's when you strip the drum from your revolver, thin the edges of your ammo belt so it acts like a feed, and switch the ammo with

volcanic bullets. With a minor adjustment, you suddenly have a 40-round handgun that can shoot as fast as you can fan the hammer. Scratch-build allows the mad scientist or alchemist to strip available contraptions or

Components

By now you're probably wondering: *Say, just how many doohickeys comprise a contraption?* In other words, how many components does a device have? Well Marshal, mad tinkering works best if the process doesn't become bogged down in the intricacies of super-science. That said, here's a list of potential items involved in putting a contraption together. Marshals can use this index to give a sense of the principles behind the devices, or to seem educated. It also sounds more realistic when telling a mad scientist's player which items he needs to hunt after to build the invention. As a rule of thumb, the Marshal can assign one trouble item for every 5 DC required to build the device. That means the inventor can't build the contraption without that piece in question, and obtaining it costs dinero, trade, or sweat.

Acetylene Light	Intake Pipe
Aetheric Pump	Intake Valve
Analytical Machine	Magnetized Bottle
Articulated Axle	Methane Tank
Articulated Frame	Micro Spring
Articulated Piping	Miniature Forge
Belt Feed	Oil Drip Feed
Bilge Pump	Plug Lead Conduit
Bladed Propeller	Pneumatic Diaphragm
Bracing Strut	Pneumatic Piston
Brake Cable	Pulleys
Bronze Chimney	Radiator
Carburetor	Reflective Lens
Clockwork Interlocking Gears	Reservoir
Coal Hopper	Rudder
Compact Furnace (small through large)	Safety Valve
Cooling Water Tank	Servo Mechanism
Corkscrew Feed	Sprockets
Crankcase	Starter Cog
Cylinder Head	Steam Regulator
Distiller	Steam Valve
Electrical Dynamo	Steel Pinion
Electrothermic Shielding	Suspension Spring
Flywheel	Suspension Wire
Gauge (Liquid, Steam)	Trembler Coil Box
Gear Band	Universal Actuator
Gear Lever	Valve Spring
Ghost Rock Boiler (small through large)	Water Jacket
Ghost Steel Struts	
Glass Deflector	



inventions to build a one shot device in an emergency. This is what turns a steam wagon into the world's biggest shotgun, or a flamethrower into a rocket pack.

Prerequisite: Best you have Tinkerin' or Alchemy at five skill ranks, as well as the appropriate Knowledge skill (like Engineering, or Chemistry).

Benefit: The player must first convince the Marshal why a rocket pack converts easily to flamethrower. The change must be possible within the mad scientist's Knowledge base, which means someone with Engineering can turn one mechanical contraption into another mechanical device. He cannot, however, cross the boundaries from engineering to biology (for example) at such short notice.

The Marshal then checks the contraption's original DC and compares that to the proposed DC of the new invention. If the Difficulty Classes match, then the mad scientist makes a Tinkerin' skill check (DC 10). If they don't match, the skill check is 10 + the differences in their DCs. That means turning a gatling pistol (DC 20), into a flamethrower (DC 25) becomes a DC 15 task (Base DC 10 + (DC 25 - DC 20) = DC 15).

Rebuilding the device takes one hour, plus an additional hour for every five DC difference between the two items. The drawbacks to this tinkering tomfoolery are:

1. The device only lasts for the duration of the scene, the limit of the fuel source, or the ammunition available. Afterwards, the contraption is ruined and must be rebuilt from scratch.
2. The device's Reliability jumps up by 5.

New Prestige Class

There's more than one way to skin a cat and more than one way to whip up an elixir.

Smoker

There's a new breed of mad scientist slowly making the rounds of the Weird West. These folks are inventors only in that they use alchemy, but they're also pseudo-shamans. They carry revolvers with alchemical engravings to make them better shots, they smoke elixir pipe tobacco to activate spell effects like Shadow Man and Blur, and their bullets contain different powders for a variety of bangs.

Most Smokers began as Taoist Chinese trying to fend for themselves in the unkind West, but soon their practices in alchemy gained popularity with others, spreading to mad scientists interested in combining their knowledge of hermetics with drugs. Now Shan Fan is the Mecca for so-called Smokers looking to plumb the secrets of alchemy while relying on narcotics to supply an existential experience. You'll find this lot in opium dens and gambling halls alike, puffing on a combination of elixirs and opiates, crafting illusions and tricks of light with their smoke.

Characteristics: While essentially mad scientists at their core, Smokers are more outgoing and congenial than their eccentric cousins. They have to be in their trade. They're about as smart and educated, only in a more focused field, and more than willing to protect themselves with their specialized six-shooters.

Smokers are businessmen with strong animist beliefs. In fact most follow a fusion of Taoism (following the ebbs and cycles of a fluid universe) and animism (the belief that the universe is alive with abundant spirits), even though they may not belong to those cultures. They apply their alchemical skills to drug manufacturing while hiding their narcotic distribution under the euphemism of enlightenment. That's not to say they're all shysters or snake-oil salesmen. In fact most of them believe in the practices they espouse, and are genuinely seeking enlightenment from the world through a union with its native spirits. If they can make a few bucks off the process too, then why not. They justify it as necessary expenses to continue their experimentation in finding that one spiritual panacea.

Problem is, the smokers also dabble with ghost rock, meaning they're susceptible to Dementia. In fact, many treasure Dementia both as a road into the spirit world and as insight into the fluid motion of the cosmos. In keeping with certain Taoist beliefs, however, rather than forcing Dementia by deliberately botching experiments, they tinker with an eye on success and wait for the universe to bless them with understanding. They don't believe in forcing the situation.

Background: Smokers are generally men and women of more affluent or culturally diverse backgrounds dabbling in mysticism to find spiritual happiness or fulfillment. Most practiced hermetic beliefs, Taoist Alchemy, Sufiism, or animism for cultural reasons or because conventional Christianity and Judaism had little to offer them. A few others are in it strictly for the money. One thing's for certain, Smokers are a culturally diverse folk, with equal numbers of Chinese, Native Americans, Arabs, African-Americans, and Caucasians following their practices.

Most Smokers remain in the Weird West where ghost rock is "plentiful." They travel from town to town, frequenting brothels and gambling halls, talking to folks and casually introducing them to drug-use (again, not for recreational reasons, but to enlighten folks). If they have enough customers in a region, they settle down for the while, using drugs to further their message and preaching to their new disciples.

About once a year, the Smokers venture to Shan Fan to visit with Ton Tzu, the man responsible for the Smoker movement. There they share their latest discoveries with each other, buy new supplies, and talk about their existential experiences. Many Smokers also make a habit of collecting parts from the critters they encounter in the Weird West, selling these exotic gems to other Smokers and alchemists for hefty dinero.

Playing With Fire

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Game Rule Information

Abilities: Intelligence is an important aspect in a Smoker's line of work. They often learn several languages to gain the gems of alchemical lore gleamed from Arab, Native American, and Chinese texts. Charisma is also an asset since Smokers rely on their rapport with others to spread their word and trade.

Special Note: Many smokers are habitual drug users, so the Marshal may relegate these folks to NPC status. Smokers gain insight from opium and peyote as aids in their vision quest. Anytime the Smoker uses opium, hashish, or peyote when creating elixirs, he gains +3 to his Alchemy check. Conversely, if he botches badly enough to earn madness, he adds +5 to his Dementia roll.

Hit Die: d6/level

Class Skills

Appraise (Int), Alchemy (Int, exclusive skill), Bluff (Cha), Craft (Int), Decipher Script (Int), Demolitions (Int), Diplomacy (Cha), Disable Device (Int), Drive (Dex), Gamblin' (Int), Gather Information (Cha), Heal (Wis), Holdout (Dex), Innuendo (Wis), Knowledge (any) (Int), Language (none), Mad Science (Int), Open Lock (Dex), Profession (Wis), Sleight of Hand (Dex), Speed Load (Dex), Tale Tellin' (Cha), and Tinkerin' (Int)

Skill Points at 1st Level: (6 + Int modifier) x 4

Skill Points at Each Additional Level: 6 + Int modifier

Smoker

Level	Base Attack Bonus	Fort Save	Ref Save	Will Save	Special
1	+1	+0	+1	+2	Starting Elixir, concoct potion
2	+1	+0	+1	+3	
3	+2	+1	+2	+3	Nature Sense (as per Shaman)
4	+3	+1	+2	+4	
5	+4	+2	+3	+4	Academic Mastery
6	+5	+2	+3	+5	
7	+6/+1	+3	+4	+5	Chemist's Stock
8	+7/+2	+3	+4	+6	Scavenge Items
9	+8/+3	+4	+5	+6	
10	+9/+4	+4	+5	+7	Vision Quest (as per Shaman)
11	+10/+5	+5	+6	+7	
12	+11/+6	+5	+6	+8	Chemist's Stock
13	+12/+7/+1	+6	+7	+8	
14	+13/+8/+2	+6	+7	+9	Academic Mastery
15	+14/+9/+3	+7	+8	+9	
16	+15/+10/+4	+7	+8	+10	
17	+16/+11/+5	+8	+9	+10	View Hunting Ground (as per Shaman)
18	+17/+12/+6	+8	+9	+11	Chemist's Stock
19	+18/+13/+7	+9	+10	+11	
20	+19/+14/+8	+9	+10	+12	Academic Mastery





CHAPTER THREE: TOOLS O' THE TRADE

Step right up folks and take a gander at these here devices. This ain't the whole kit n' caboodle, but it's a respectable collection from the folks at the Collegium and Smith & Robards, with a few devices thrown in from independent inventors and alchemists.

Scientific Equipment

These newfangled doodads make the average mad scientist's life easier in a number of ways.

Ecto-Plasmic Calcifier

Effect: Developed by the Collegium and co-opted by the Union, this device is a godsend in fighting non-corporeal beings. The Calcifier uses ghost rock particles suspended in a saline and gel solution, in tandem with a static electric generator. When fired, the static electricity permits the saline/gel goop to stick to incorporeal targets, temporarily giving them substance. Once covered with a charge, the creature is vulnerable to normal attacks.

The device has 10 shots before requiring recharging, with a range increment of 5 feet. A successful hit renders the incorporeal solid and vulnerable to normal damage for 1d4

rounds. Bear in mind this device inflicts no actual damage, and cannot hurt or affect living targets.

Cost: \$2,500

Reliability: 6

Patent Holder: The Collegium

Malfunctions

Minor: The static generator fails, giving the solution no cohesive element. It can't stick to incorporeal beings. A Tinkerin' check (DC 10) fixes the problem, but wastes one round of action.

Major: The Calcifier's pump fails meaning the device cannot shoot the goop. A Tinkerin' check (DC 15) remedies the problem after 1d4 rounds of repair work.

Catastrophe: Massive backfire! The static generator accidentally charges the goop before it leaves the reservoir, igniting the ghost rock particulate matter. The reservoir explodes, covering the user in the charged goop, and restricting all his actions with a -5 penalty until he's cleaned himself off.

Ghost Rock Detector

Effect: This phonograph-like device is a must for prospectors and mad scientists looking for a private supply of ghost rock. By turning the box's crank, the device sucks in air and any potential ghost rock



vapor in the direction in which it's being pointed. The device then ignites the air. No burning gas in the test chamber means no ghost rock. If the air ignites, however, the device expels the burning vapors through a fan, which is attached by gears to bells. The closer one is to the source of ghost rock, the louder and faster the bells ring.

Additionally, this device can also monitor ghost rock vapors in a mine. When the vapors reach unstable levels, it rings, warning the miners of danger.

To function properly, the Marshal first determines if ghost rock is in the area. Tracking it down, however, requires a Knowledge (Geology) check (DC 20). Failure means the prospector just wasted 1d8 hours looking in the wrong place. Success means the prospector comes within 100 yards of the deposit in question. Each successful Knowledge (Geology) check (DC 10) after that brings the prospector 10 yards closer to the claim (every 5 successes above the DC increases that by 10 yards). Each failure draws him away 1d4x10 yards away. Each attempt also represents 30 minutes of hard work.

Cost: \$3,000

Reliability: 2

Patent Holder: Smith & Robards

Malfunctions

Minor: The item gives a false reading, dragging the prospector 1d8x10 yards away from the suspected claim. As a monitor, it fails to sound the alarm when vapors reach dangerous levels.

Major: The ignition process fails and accumulates ghost rock in the ignition chamber. It blows the unburned vapors into the prospectors face, who must now make a Fortitude save (DC 17) or come down with rock fever.

Catastrophe: Too much compression results in an explosion, incurring 4d6 damage to anyone holding the device.

Owl Eye Goggles

Effect: Given how dangerous nights have become in the Weird West, this device allows the user to see in almost total darkness without torches or lanterns, and without any restrictions.

The goggles use magnifying glasses with inset parabolic mirrors to trap and reflect the ambient light. A small series of mirrors redirects the light to the viewpiece in front of the eye, allowing the user nearly unhindered visual acuity in the dark. This means the user can operate in all but abject darkness (where there is no light to reflect). Additional considerations to worry about include:

1. The goggles cannot control the light amplification process, meaning that anything over lantern brightness will blind the user for 1d6 rounds unless she makes a Reflex save (DC 15). A roll of 1 means the user is permanently blinded.
2. The user must roll for the item's Reliability once per hour.
3. The goggles impart tunnel vision, meaning the user suffers -10 to notice anything at the edges of her vision; a dangerous situation because many abominations like to sneak up on their victims from behind.

Cost: \$1,000

Reliability: 2

Patent Holder: Smith & Robards

Malfunctions

Minor: The lenses are out of focus, meaning the user has a -5 penalty to anything relying on visual acuity (like aiming, reading, or noticing things).

Major: The lenses are misaligned and thus useless. The user must spend 2 hours of work and succeed at a Tinkerin' check (DC15) to remove the lenses and realign everything properly.

Catastrophe: The lenses are too well focused, and end up amplifying the ambient light into a beam right into the user's eyes. The user must succeed at a Reflex save (DC 15) or be blinded permanently. Needless to say, the wearer should removed the goggles as soon as possible.

Survival Equipment

You can never have too much help surviving the perils of the Weird West. These handy gadgets do just that.

Chemical Dowser

Effect: The chemical dowser is a backpack analyzer with a divining-rod pump. The pump not only sucks in air for the backpack for analysis, but it also provides the necessary static charge to power the entire chemical-finding contraption.

While the device can determine if a specific chemical or item is within 100 yards of the user, it only does so through comparative analysis. This means the user must provide a sample of the item in question for the device to locate, and it can only store that one search parameter at a time. Fortunately, the device is fairly sophisticated, meaning it can differentiate between anything as far afield as water, specific minerals, edible plant matter, and even meat (organic material). In this capacity the user adds +10 to Knowledge (Nature, Chemistry, & Biology) checks made to find the substance in question.

Cost: \$600

Reliability: 3

Patent Holder: The Collegium

Malfunctions

Minor: The divining rod pump accidentally targets the sample in the backpack and sends the user after his own tail. A Tinkerin' check (DC 10) and 1d4 rounds should set the matter right.

Major: The wires from the pump generating the electrical charge are exposed. The user suffers 1d6 static shock when he pumps the unit for power. Fixing this problem requires a Tinkerin' check (DC 15) and 1d8 rounds of work.

Catastrophe: A short in the generator sets the backpack ablaze, along with the user's apparel. If the user does not succeed in a Reflex save (DC15), he suffers 1d6 damage each round that the flame is not extinguished. Dropping and rolling adds +2 to the user's Saving Throw, while jumping in water extinguishes the fire.

Grapple Gun

Effect: The size of a double-barrel shotgun, this device uses a mini-ghost rock generator to supply the forceful blast of steam that propels the grappling hook and cable wire. The arrow shaped grapple-hook can either pierce soft targets or wrap around outcroppings to secure the line. The user may then use the cable's pulley to thread stronger rope through, thus providing nimble climbers with a suitable avenue of ascent.

The grapple gun comes with 100' of wire and the ability to launch wire up to 50'. The generator holds an ounce of ghost rock, which equals 100 charges. While it takes one round to reload the grapple gun, the pressure chamber requires three rounds to build up the proper force for an effective shot.

Cost: \$150

Reliability: 2

Patent Holder: The Collegium

Malfunctions

Minor: A small leak in the pressure chamber prevents it from firing at full capacity (halve the range and damage potential, see page 48). Unless repaired immediately, the leak also drains the device of one effective charge every two rounds. A Tinkerin' check (DC 10), a round of investigation, and some sealant should solve the problem easily enough.

Major: The wire snags in the pulley when fired, yanking the gun out of the user's hands unless he succeeds at a Reflex save (DC 15). Otherwise, the gun is pulled along with the grapple and either lodges in (or wraps around) the target, or it comes tumbling down and smashes into the ground, breaking into useless bits. If the user held on to the gun, he can repair the problem with a Tinkerin' check (DC 15) after 1d8 rounds.

Catastrophe: The grapple is stuck in the barrel and the pressure chamber explodes from the strain. It inflicts 3d6 damage against anyone holding the device.

Tonal Alarm

Effect: Security in the Weird West is a luxury most folks couldn't afford, until now. Once activated, this device maps out all structures within a 50' radius through inaudible tones (much like sonar). If an object larger than a cat crosses the 50-foot boundary, the tonal alarm registers their presence and emits a foghorn-like claxon to awaken the deepest sleeper.

Fortunately for the user, the tonal alarm also ignores any activity within 20 feet of it, allowing the posse to move about freely while the device is active. It also functions for 10 hours before the user must wind the coil-spring for one hour to reuse it. The device does not function on noncorporeal creatures or on anything using its abilities outside the 50' range.

The device automatically allows the sleepers to make a Listen check (DC 5) regardless of if they have the skill. Success means the alarm woke them up, while failure means they're sleeping like stone oxen.

Cost: \$1,000

Reliability: 3

Patent Holder: The Collegium

Malfunctions

Minor: The inaudible tone is actually slightly audible and distracting. Unless fixed with a Tinkerin' roll (DC 10), everyone suffers -2 on all actions the next morning from poor sleep.

Major: The device is overly sensitive, and can pick up environmental changes the size of mice, and even large insects. It goes off every few rounds if left active unless someone can fix it with a Tinkerin' roll (DC 15) and 1d4 hours of effort.

Catastrophe: That supposedly inaudible tone is now a piercing whistle like a bullet through the eardrums. Anyone failing a Fortitude save (DC 15) is now permanently deaf.

Weapons

The New Science has provided many of ways to fold, spindle, and mutilate your fellow man.

Acid Gun

Effect: This weapon uses pressurized air to fire a stream of concentrated acid. While the device's range is limited to a maximum of 15 feet, its advantages include continued damage over several rounds, and anyone with an understanding of Chemistry can refill the ammo reservoir (DC 10 to manufacture the acid).

Once the acid hits the target, it continues to burn for three rounds, dropping 1d6 damage each round after the first. A canteen full of water lowers the damage by 1 die automatically, while full immersion neutralizes the acid immediately. If the acid misses the target, use the Grenade-like Weapon Attacks table (*Players Handbook*, page 138). The gun deals 1d6 Splash Damage.

Cost: \$2,500 (\$20 for refill)

Reliability: 2

Patent Holder: Smith & Robards

Malfunctions

Minor: There's no air pressure to eject the acid; each action spent pumping the acid gun recharges one shot.

Major: The acid dissolves the air reservoir seal, preventing the weapon from firing. The seal must be replaced, which requires a Tinkerin' check (DC 10) and 1d20 rounds of work.

Catastrophe: The acid tank ruptures, spraying the user with 1d10 shots of acid.

Electrostatic Blades

Effect: These knives and sabers contain a micro-static generator in the pommel. By pumping the handle (which requires one action), the blade generates one charge (up to a maximum of six short-lived charges in the capacitors). Unfortunately, each charge dissipates at a rate of one damage die every five rounds.

The attacker may either inflict normal damage with the cutting edge of the blade, or unleash a static charge by hitting the target with the flat of the blade. The latter attack delivers subdual damage. While this bypasses armor (negating AC bonuses), the subdual damage does not affect mechanical devices, inanimate objects, or Harrowed.

Cost: \$400 (knife), \$800 (saber), \$40 (capacitor)

Reliability: 2

Patent Holder: Smith & Robards

Malfunctions

Minor: The charges bleed off immediately, draining the capacitors completely.

Major: The weapon discharges into the user, inflicting half subdual damage.

Catastrophe: The capacitors are fried, unleashing all stored charges into the user for full subdual damage.

Gatling Shotgun

Effect: The Gatling shotgun uses a metal-link belt to feed shells into shotgun (shells that would normally jam or be crushed because of their cardboard casing). This belt-feed system allows the double-barrel shotgun to continue firing for as long as the shooter has her finger on the trigger.

The 15-round belts require two actions to load: one action to remove the empty belt and one to load the new one. Once the shooter "feeds" the shotgun, he must wind the clockwork mechanism to cycle through the rounds (requiring one action for every five shots).

Some folks have tried stringing ammo belts together to cut down on the reload time, but this only puts greater stress on the belt feed gears, penalizing the Gatling shotgun's Reliability by 1 per extra belt. For rules on using double barrel shotguns, see the *Deadlands d20 RPG* (page 78).

Cost: \$4,000 (\$100 per belt)

Reliability: 3

Patent Holder: Smith & Robards

Malfunctions

Minor: The shotgun jams, requiring a Tinkerin' check (DC 10) to remedy.

Major: A belt misfeed jams the clip in the chamber; a Tinkerin' check (DC 20) loosens the belt.

Catastrophe: The cartridge isn't aligned with the firing chamber, causing a misfire and explosion. The gun blows up, inflicting 6d6 damage on the shooter and 3d6 splash damage on anyone within five feet. A Reflex save (DC15) halves this splash damage.

Flash Gun

Effect: Although designed to look like an oversized pistol with a large cylinder, this device actually fires a directed blast of light in a 90-degree arc, affecting anyone in front of the gun. Anyone caught within its maximum range of 20-feet must make a Reflex save (DC 10). If he fails the check, he suffers a penalty to all visual-based actions equal to his degree of failure for 2d6 rounds.

This device uses normal flash powder found at any photographer or chemists store at a cost of \$1 for 10 charges. The gun requires one minute to load each chamber. It cannot affect any target beyond 20 feet, however, save perhaps to distract them.

Cost: \$150

Reliability: 2

Patent Holder: The Collegium

Malfunctions

Minor: The chambered powder does not ignite, meaning that charge is wasted.

Major: The entire batch of powder, including all six chambered charges, are ineffective and must be replaced.

Catastrophe: A misfire causes all chambers to explode simultaneously. Everyone in a 20' diameter around the weapon, including the user, must make a Reflex save (DC 16) or be blinded for 4d6 rounds.

Lightning Gun

Effect: This seemingly messy contraption consists of a collection of thick copper cables, tubing, and gears, attached to a pair of steel spikes through copper cables. Rather than generating the electricity, the gun draws on the air's ambient energy to create the static charge. Because this takes a couple of seconds, it can only fire every other round.

To use this slightly cumbersome device, the user must first pound both spikes into the earth (each requires three actions), grounding the gun and preventing the user from taking damage from the energy buildup. The copper cables afford only 10 feet of maximum movement, but because the gun does not rely on built-in charges, it has effectively unlimited ammo when grounded.

One beneficial aspect of the weapon is that metal armor offers no protection against the lightning blast (negating the target's armor-related ACs). Additionally, the shooter gains a +4 bonus to hit targets standing in water.

Cost: \$2,750

Reliability: 4

Patent Holder: The Collegium

Malfunctions

Minor: The charge isn't at full power yet and the attack just bled off the energy reservoir. The weapon needs two rounds to generate another charge.

Major: One of the gears just jammed, requiring a Tinkerin' check (DC 15) and 1d10 minutes to repair.

Catastrophe: The weapon proved too effective at drawing ambient energy and just tapped into a massive charge that overloaded the weapon. Now 1d6 lightning blasts are flying off in all directions, randomly targeting anyone within 20 feet.

Net Gun

Effect: The net gun looks like a double-barreled rifle with the barrels angled slightly away from each other and a net bundle nestled between them. The angled barrels allow the net to expand outward at either edge. When fired, the net gun unleashes low velocity lead slugs with fishhooks, which are attached to a strong cord leading to the 8'x8' net. When the net hits a target, the slugs whip around the target, enabling the hooks to snag the net mesh, effectively lassoing the already trapped (and mighty sorry-looking) target.

Unlike a normal net attack that counts as a ranged touch attack, this device is a ranged attack with a +4 bonus thanks to the angled barrels. It also has a maximum range of 30'. As per a normal net attack, however, the target suffers a -2 to attack rolls and -4 on Dexterity related actions (though it's Marshal's discretion whether the snared rabbit can cast hexes and spells). The target cannot run, and is restricted to half their movement. Escaping the net also requires an Escape Artist check (DC 20), which costs an entire round. The net has 10 hit points, but a Strength check (DC 50) can break through the mesh (hey, some critters are capable, though the net isn't effective on anything bigger than Large).

The net gun takes a full minute to reload, which requires a Dexterity Check (DC 10) to accomplish. Failure means an automatic malfunction—no Reliability roll required. For those heroes in a pinch, however, the net gun can also be used as a rifle. It's aim, however, is horrible, incurring a -4 penalty to ranged attacks.

Cost: \$350

Reliability: 2

Patent Holder: The Collegium

Malfunctions

Minor: The trigger sticks, preventing the gun from firing either the netting or ammo round. A Tinkerin' check (DC 10) and 1d4 rounds of elbow grease should clear up the problem.

Major: The slug's powder charges were too high-powered, snapping the cable as they left the barrels and leaving the net behind. The two-hooked slugs whiz past the target on either side, inflicting no damage. It requires two minutes to remove the defective netting and replace it with a new one. For normal bullets, the chambered round is a slow-fire slug, meaning the powder charge is burning slowly





and won't detonate just yet. The shooter can choose to wait for 1d6 rounds before the powder finally ignites and the bullet fires, or risk ejecting it immediately. Ejecting it causes the bullet to detonate as it leaves the port, exploding in the shooter's face or near his hands. It inflicts 1d10 damage.

Catastrophe: One barrel does not fire. It anchors one end of the net to the rifle, and causes the other slug to whip out and around, whacking the shooter for 2d10 points. For live ammo, the bullet explodes in the barrel, peeling it like a banana and inflicting 2d10 damage on the shooter.

Quickdraw Cannon and Support Chassis

Effect: Before ghost rock, nobody brought cannons to a shootout; now times have changed along with the methods. This ghost-rock tempered, steel suspension frame looks like a skeleton, but in fact it's a support chassis to counterbalance heavy weights. The ghost rock generator mounted on the back provides power for 40 hours, increasing the user's Strength by a prodigious +15! This strength, however, is taken

up entirely in moving and counterbalancing the hip-swivel 6-pounder cannon. The user has normal equivalent Strength. Removing the cannon unbalances the whole contraption (creating an automatic Malfunction, no reliability roll required).

While the support framework does not hinder freedom of action, it does prevent the user from running, cutting movement by half. Fortunately, the cannon mount is fairly agile, and only incurs a -3 to Dexterity checks when swiveled into position and fired (using a remote trigger connected to the unit's gauntlet through a cord). The only drawback to this process is that bringing the cannon up also swivels two support rods from the back out and into the ground. This keeps the shooter steady from the recoil, but prevents him from moving until the cannon is swiveled down again (and the support rods swing back up into position against the frame).

The tri-chambered cannon has three shells, each requiring two rounds to reload and prep. The left hip mount has a six-shell rack, enabling the shooter to load the armor-piercing rounds herself. The user must have a minimum of 13 Strength to use this device properly.

Cost: \$7,000 (\$50 per solid round for 6-pounder)

AC: +5

Hit Points: 15

Hardness: 5

Reliability: 3 (roll only when firing the cannon)

Patent Holder: McCaffry Steel Works

Malfunctions

Minor: The chambered shell is a dud, preventing the cannon from firing this action.

Major: The support rods did not flip out in time. The recoil knocks the user on his duff; he can't get back up without help and must leave the suit or play sitting duck for enemy sharpshooters.

Catastrophe: A loose actuator unbalances the entire unit. It collapses under its own weight, ruining the suit and crushing the user with 8d6 damage (Blunt).

Sonic Destabilization Ray

Effect: Mad scientists may invent implements of destruction, but many are surprisingly squeamish when it comes to actually killing folks. This device emits high amplitude sound waves to agitate the inner ear and induce nausea while affecting the target's balance. It pacifies targets without so much as a bruise, making this device the favored weapon among bounty hunters trying to capture their targets alive.

The SDR relies on a backpack generator to supply the power, and a hand pump to recharge empty cells (a two-hour task). A rubber-coated copper cable leads to the gun, which hides a series of shielded tuning forks. The dish-shaped magnifying trumpet serves as the barrel, amplifying and directing the sound waves generated by the vibrating forks.

Once caught in the SDR's sound wake, the target must make a Fortitude save (DC 15, though the victim gains +1 to the save for every 10 ft. between him and the weapon). Failure means the target takes subdual damage as

well as losing Id4 Constitution temporarily. The sound is also painfully distracting, inflicting penalties to all actions for 1 hour based on the target's degree of failure (if he missed his save DC by three, for example, he suffers a -3 to all actions).

Cost: \$2,500

Reliability: 5

Patent Holder: The Collegium

Malfunctions

Minor: The tuning forks are misaligned, so the weapon does nothing but squawk. This requires a Tinkerin' check (DC 10) and Id8 rounds to set right.

Major: The tuning forks vibrate violently, sending a nasty shiver down through the grip and delivering Id6 points of subdual damage to the user in the form of a rattling shock.

Catastrophe: A violent spasm from the tuning forks literally shreds the gun, inflicting 3d6 piercing damage on the shooter from flying shrapnel.

Firearm Accessories

What's a good hogleg without some equally good doodads to attach to it?

Magnetic Gloves

Effect: The magnetic glove is a thin cloth woven with magnetized metal fibers, while the gun pommel has a weak lodestone on either side of the grip. When drawing, this allows the gun to almost leap into the approaching hand, gapping a precious couple of inches and giving the user +2 on initiative. This can be cumulative with the bonus from a fast-draw holster.

The only downside is that though the glove is thin, allowing the user to maintain a fine touch, it does penalize actions that require a sensitive touch. Open Lock, Pick Pocket, Sleight of Hand, etc. suffer a -2 penalty when used in tandem with the glove.

Cost: \$125

Reliability: 2 (roll when determining initiative).

Patent Holder: The Collegium

Malfunctions

Minor: Something has demagnetized the fibers, preventing the gun from leaping into the shootist's grip. If the user does not succeed at a Reflex save (DC 10), he fumbles with the grip, losing one action. If he succeeds, he only uses straight initiative plus the bonus from the fast-draw holster to determine his turn.

Major: The glove's magnetic pull is actually too powerful. It pulls the gun from the holster before the shootist is ready, forcing him to make a Reflex save (DC 15) to catch the gun. Failure means the gun whipped out and dropped, requiring a full round action to pick it up since the user was startled. Success means the shootist caught the gun, but wasted one attack fumbling for it.

Catastrophe: The lodestone and glove in tandem are affecting the bullets as they leave the barrel and altering their trajectory. Until the shootist can replace the glove and lodestone with "weaker" models, all shots from this gun suffer a -4 penalty to hit.

Magnum Reinforcement Process

Effect: This simple process reinforces the firearm's general frame, welds, braces, and brackets, protecting it from the rigors of using Magnum bullets. It prevents the gun from falling apart on a failed Reliability roll, and requires no Reliability check itself.

Cost: \$75

Reliability: NA

Patent Holder: The Collegium

Malfunctions

Minor: NA

Major: NA

Catastrophe: NA

Silencer Glove

Effect: This unusually heavy glove slides over the pistol and gun hand, where a drawstring closes it shut at the wrist. Inside the glove, a series of metal baffles cover the barrel, absorbing the sound of the bullet and dissipating the escaping gases. A hidden flap in the glove allows the bullet to leave without affecting its flight.

The glove muffles the gunshot, requiring a Listen check (DC 15) to notice. For every 5 yards between the gunshot and potential listeners, the check's DC increases by 1. Similarly, noisy situations also increase the difficulty of hearing the shot.

Cost: \$250 (\$20 replacement baffles)

Reliability: 1

Patent Holder: Smith & Robards

Malfunctions

Minor: Worn baffles do not protect the shot as well as they should. The DC to hear the shot is now 10.

Major: The baffles give out and the shot is not masked whatsoever. The baffles must be replaced.

Catastrophe: The gun barrel was not properly aligned with the baffles. The shot ricochets off the baffles and into the shootist's hand.

Telescopic Sight

Effect: This self-explanatory device improves the rifle or handgun's ability to hit distant targets, in effect increasing their range increments. This does not actually boost the weapon's range; it merely offsets the penalties for hitting those targets further away.

Telescopic sights come with various multipliers, each increasing the weapon's range increment by 30 ft. Thus a x2 multiplier increases the range increment by +30 feet while a x4 multiplier increases it to +60 feet, and a x8 by +90 feet in total. To gain this benefit, however, the sniper must spend a partial action targeting the opponent. Otherwise, the shooter gains no range increment bonuses and the difficulty of

acquiring a target quickly through a scope throws the shooter's aim off slightly, incurring a -2 penalty to all attack rolls.

The sniper may also purchase an Owl Eye Sight to allow for night shooting, but the cost is triple that of a normal sight.

Cost: \$150 (2x Sight), \$250 (4x Sight), \$500 (8x Sight) x3 cost (Owl Eye Sights), 10% cost (Replacement Lens).

Reliability: 1 (3 for Owl Eye Sights)

Patent Holder: Smith & Robards

Malfunctions (See Owl Eye Glasses for potential malfunctions with an Owl Eye Sight)

Minor: The scope is out of focus, hindering all shots with a -4 penalty. A Tinkerin' check (DC 10) will rectify the problem.

Major: The scope is off center, hindering shots with a -8 penalty until the shooter can recalibrate the sights (requiring four actions).

Catastrophe: The lens shatters and is unusable until replaced. The shooter takes 2d4 damage to that eye, blinding him until the damage can be healed.

Defensive Items

Sometimes it's more important to avoid getting shot than it is hit the target—especially when your smokewagon is bouncing bullets off the target like lead raindrops. These gizmos give your hero a defensive edge against his opponents.

Bullet-Proof Garments

Effect: As the name implies, these garments are outfitted with ghost rock tempered steel plating. The light weight plates stops most normal bullets and slows rifle rounds, while the heavier plating offers better protection at the cost of mobility. Hats protect the head, vests shield the chest and torso, chaps guard the legs, while dusters protect everything between the shoulders and shins. See the table below for the protection each garment offers.

Cost: \$500 (Light Armored Hat), \$1,800 (Light Armored Vest), \$1,200 (Light Armored Chaps), \$800 (Heavy Armored Hat), \$2,800 (Heavy Armored Vest), \$1,900 (Heavy Armored Leggings), \$3,500 (Light Duster), and \$5,500 (Heavy Duster)

Reliability: 1 (roll whenever the target is hit by an attack)

Patent Holder: Smith & Robards

Bullet-Proof Clothes

Item	Armor Bonus	Max Dex Bonus	Armor Check Penalty	Speed	Weight
Light Hat	+1	Unrestricted	Unrestricted	30 ft.	2 lb.
Light Vest	+3	+3	-1	30 ft.	10 lb.
Light Chaps	+3	+3	-1	25 ft.	10 lb.
Heavy Hat	+2	+3	-1	30 ft.	5 lb.
Heavy Vest	+4	+3	-3	25 ft.	20 lb.
Heavy Chaps	+4	+2	-3	20 ft.	20 lb.
Light Duster	+4	+2	-4	25 ft.	25 lb.
Heavy Duster	+5	+1	-5	20 ft.	30 lb.

Malfunctions

Minor: The armor resists the blow, but does not stop the kinetic force properly. The target takes half the weapon's damage as blunt force trauma.

Major: The shot strikes a weak spot in the armor, reducing its Armor Bonus by -1.

Catastrophe: The shot destroys the armored garment, removing all bonuses.

Bullet-Repellent Clothing

Effect: This set of clothing is actually designed using an alchemical-saturated weave with a bit of engineering savvy. The clothing repulses lead—as in what constitutes most bullets—using the incoming kinetic thrust against itself. In effect, the weave shifts the kinetic energy in bullets, shunting it away from the clothing, and thus the target. Fortunately, this applies to incoming shots, and does not effect bullets fired by the person wearing the bullet-repellent clothing—most of the time.

This is by no means a failsafe system, but the fact is the repulsion field actually works better on larger caliber slugs than it does on smaller ones. Scientists have yet to find a means of diverting rocks, arrows, or other objects/spells not comprised of lead, however. Still, few folks are actually complaining about this invention, even though the process is still costly.

Because the clothing repels lead, the potential damage dice of the slug-thrower dictates the negative modifiers that the shooter suffers when trying to hit the target.

Cost: \$2,500 per suit or dress (\$500 to retreat the fabric)

Reliability: 4

Patent Holder: The Collegium

Malfunctions

Minor: This problem rears its head the next time the person wearing the suit goes for his slug-thrower. The clothing throws off the bullet's trajectory, penalizing the shooter using the modifiers listed below.

Major: The alchemy-based weave is losing its effectiveness. All penalties to hit the target are gone until the suit can be retreated.

Catastrophe: The fold of the clothing in that instant just funneled the shot into the target like water down the drain. The penalties to hit listed above just became positive modifiers for the enemy, and the damage inflicted is an automatic critical.

Shooting Modifiers

Damage Die	Penalty
D4	-1
D6	-2
D8	-4
D10	-6
D12	-8

Whisk-Free Backpack

Effect: Most folks in the Weird West find themselves in precarious situations at least once. For those imperiled individuals who draw

trouble like a magnet, the whisk-free backpack may be the best outdoor escape route available to them. The backpack contains a fold-up mini-balloon, two cans of alchemically treated helium and ghost rock vapor, and a reinforced harness to handle the user's weight. Just one tug on the contraption's ripcord empties both canisters into the balloon, forcing it open and yanking the user into the sky and out of harm's way—presumably.

Both canisters contain normally "inert" or noble gases combined with ghost rock. Alone, they do nothing, but mixed together they expand and become lighter than air. The one-shot formula can displace up to 300 lb. of weight, meaning the user and his gear.

The balloon itself is a thick weave of alchemically treated fibers, which impart some armor protection against ranged weapons. At the balloon's rear are two gas nozzles controlled by cords on the backpack's harness. When the wearer pulls either cord, the appropriate nozzle ignites a bit of escaping gas, giving the balloon forward momentum and steering capabilities. In this fashion, the device has a wrenching vertical movement of 70 feet. Horizontal movement costs a ratio of 2:1, meaning that for every 10 feet traveled horizontally, the balloon loses 20 feet of vertical climb (both in speed and from their maximum ceiling). Most users ascend fast to escape bullet range (to a maximum ceiling of 1000 feet), then either allow the winds to carry them elsewhere, or bleed off gas to move. Remember, however, that for every 10 feet they move horizontally, they drop by 20 feet because of escaping gas.

The danger of this device is that each puncture to the balloon robs it of vertical movement by 5 feet a round. If the device loses all its Hit Points while still in the air, it instantly bleeds all its gas, and the user falls (see Falling Damage in the *Dungeon Master's Guide*, page 112). If the puncture is a result of a bullet hole, there's a 1 in 6 chance (on a 1d6) that the puncture is a Catastrophic malfunction.

Cost: \$1,000 (\$70 for each canister refill)

AC: 15

Hit Points: 20

Hardness: 4

Reliability: 2

Patent Holder: Shan Fan Hazard Free West Ltd.

Malfunctions

Minor: Partial mixture on the two canisters means that the balloon is only half as effective with a 500-foot ceiling.

Major: The jerking motion of the balloon rips the harness free of the user. Unless the user can succeed at a Reflex save (DC 13), the balloon continues its flight without him. Otherwise, the user is clutching at the harness while it ascends. To steer the device from this position, the user must succeed at a Reflex check (DC 12) to reach the guide cords. Regardless, the user must succeed in a Fortitude save (DC 12) every five rounds, or fall off.

Catastrophe: Whether because of a bullet, or because a faulty nozzle sparked the gas, the mixture explodes, inflicting 4d10 damage against anyone within 10 feet. The explosion's severity drops by one die for every five feet beyond that. Oh, the humanity!

Specialized Ammunition

Sometimes ordinary lead coffin nails just don't cut it. These specialty ammos give your gunslinger a fighting chance against some of the Weird West's nastier critters.

Armor Piercing Rounds

Effect: Armor piercing bullets use ghost rock-tempered steel and more effective powder power loads to provide greater punch per round. Unlike normal bullets that damage objects by imparting kinetic damage, however, armor piercing bullets are like fast arrows that slice through targets. This means they inflict 1 die less damage depending on the firearm, but they ignore 3 points worth of armor class bonuses.

Cost: \$1/round (pistol), \$2/round (rifle), \$50/solid or \$100/fused (6-pounder), \$65/solid or \$125/fused (10-pounder), \$75/solid or \$150/fused (12-pounder)





Reliability: 1 (roll for the weapon first, then the bullet)

Patent Holder: Smith & Robards

Malfunctions

Minor: The round is flawed and does not ignore the AC.

Major: The round is fragile and shatters if it hits armor (inflicting no damage).

Catastrophe: The round's enhanced power load ignites in the chamber, exploding and inflicting the gun's damage to the user.

Cartridge, Auto-Incendiary

Effect: This expensive killer is infused with alchemical formulas (including ghost rock powder) at the moment of casting, thus accounting for the hefty price tag. The payoff, however, is that if the cartridge enters the blood stream, it initiates a chemical reaction that spreads through the circulatory system like wildfire. Most hapless fools hit with this round can do nothing but scream in pain while their own blood boils and cooks them from the inside out—not a pleasant way to shuffle of this mortal coil.

The cartridge normally inflicts 2d6 damage. If any of it bypasses armor and draws blood from the target (causes damage), the reaction begins and builds in volatility. The next round, the victim must make a Fortitude save (DC 15), or the cartridge inflicts an additional 2d4 damage. Each round after that, the chemical reaction spreads to the vital organs, inflicting 2d6, and then 2d8, then 2d10, then 2d12 dice worth of damage by the end.

Each round the victim can make a Fortitude save of increasing difficulty (+1 DC each round). In each instance, this only halves the damage, though if the target makes three saves in a row, the chemical reaction peters out. The other option is to sever the affected limb before the reaction spreads, but most grizzled veterans of the Weird West prefer to survive or die intact.

This cartridge does not affect creatures lacking in normal blood, including Harrowed.

Cost: \$400/bullet

Reliability: 4

Patent Holder: The Collegium

Malfunctions

Minor: The cartridge has a reduced effect, only inflicting one die worth of damage at each step.

Major: The chemical reaction is a dud even though the bullet does the normal 2d6 damage. There goes \$400 down the drain and the chance to watch somebody barbecue themselves.

Catastrophe: The round explodes in the chamber, blowing the gun up for 2d6 damage and infecting the user with the chemical reaction. The fun begins next round when the chemicals spread through the hapless shooter's blood.

Cartridge, Explosive

Effect: Invented by the Collegium's Fineas von Landingham, this round uses alchemy to stabilize a nitroglycerin reservoir whose prime components are partitioned by a wax wall. Upon impact, the compounds mix, resulting in a micro-explosion sure to put a pretty hole in the target.

Because the bullet explodes on impact, thus lessening penetration, it reduces the gun's normal damage by one die. Conversely, the micro-explosive is strong enough to inflict an additional 2d6 points of damage, with a splash of 5 ft. against surrounding targets (an additional 1d6 points of damage).

This cartridge works best for slug-throwers, including shotgun slugs. Shot-shell rounds are too fragile for this type of specialized ammunition.

Cost: \$25/bullet

Reliability: 3

Patent Holder: The Collegium

Malfunctions

Minor: Partial mixture on the nitroglycerin reduces the explosive damage to 1d6 with no splash.

Major: The wax seal breaks prematurely; the round explodes enroute to the target. Marshal's discretion as to whether anyone is close enough to suffer splash damage.

Catastrophe: The round explodes before leaving the chamber (like you weren't expecting that). The gun is ruined and the shooter suffers from the 2d6 explosion. If there are other

explosive rounds in the cylinder, they all detonate as well, each inflicting their full explosive damage.

Cartridge Magnum

Effect: As the name magnum implies, the round is larger than most, and houses a more powerful propellant. Combined, these modifications impart greater stopping power with each shot, effectively increasing each slug-thrower's damage by one die. Thus a Ballard '72 Rifle inflicts 3d10 worth of damage instead of 2d10.

Magnum shotgun shells are less effective, and only impart a +3 bonus to damage. Additionally any gun that hasn't undergone the Magnum Reinforcement Process automatically suffers a Catastrophic malfunction on a failed Reliability check.

Cost: \$5/bullet

Reliability: 2

Patent Holder: The Collegium

Malfunctions

Minor: The magnum round is a dud.

Major: The round is too large for the barrel, damaging the interior. This shot and every other now suffers -5 to hit because the barrel sends them spinning off their axis. The barrel must be replaced.

Catastrophe: Even with the Magnum Reinforcement Process, this still has a chance of occurring, though it isn't an automatic malfunction with the process in place. The shot is too powerful and literally rips the gun apart. The round explodes in the chamber, inflicting full damage on the unlucky shooter and ruining the gun.

Cartridge, Mine-Spray

Effect: There's currently a small conflict over proprietorship of the technology used in this cartridge between the Smoker's Hazard Free West Ltd. (SFHFW) and the Collegium. The cartridge's function is not in question, but rather the use of a paraffin-based cover to shield the pellets within the cartridge (which melts away when the shooter fires the round). The Collegium developed this patent for their shotshells, which is essentially a shotgun shell for rifles and revolvers. The SFHFW, however, are using the same principle for their patented mine-spray bullets.

This cartridge contains chemical pellets sheathed in a thin veneer of wax. When fired, the cartridge's paraffin head melts away, unleashing a spray of pellets over a short area. The pellets, however, have no penetration. Upon impact, the wax seal breaks and the chemical compound is exposed to the air, hardening and turning invisible.

The stains are in fact volatile explosives that pop like firecrackers if anything comes in contact with (or jostles) them. Each stain inflicts a point of damage against whatever physically touches them. Because range determines the pellet spread, each range increment counts as a five-foot spread. When someone steps in that area, they accidentally touch upon Xd6 worth of pellets (as determined by range, check out the Mine-Spray Table below), earning equivalent damage.

Tools o' the Trade

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This peppering damage also serves as a distraction, penalizing the victim with -2 on all actions while the stains are exploding. Spraying the area with water neutralizes the volatile compound, however.

Cost: \$30/bullet

Reliability: 2

Patent Holder: Shan Fan Hazard Free West Ltd.

Malfunctions

Minor: The paraffin didn't melt away in time, which means the pellets never broke their seals or spread. The cartridge inflicts 1d6 damage with no penetration, though anyone handling the round afterwards might suffer 4d6 from the exploding chemicals.

Major: Misfire. The paraffin broke too early, smearing the interior barrel with explosive. The cartridge misses its mark entirely. If dismantled and cleaned in water, the gun is fine. If someone uses the gun before cleaning the it, the gun suffers from a Catastrophic malfunction as described below.

Catastrophe: The pellets already leaked in the cartridge, so firing it destroys the gun and inflicts full damage on the shooter.

Mine-Spray

Firing Range	Spread	Damage
Touching	5 ft.	4d6
First Incr.	10 ft.	3d6
Second Incr.	15 ft.	2d6
Third Incr. and beyond	20 ft.	1d6

Alchemical Closet

Let's see what the alchemists have in their bag of tricks.

Caustic Vapors

Effect: This bottled pill reacts with air, blossoming into a cloud of gas 30 feet in diameter. Anyone in the cloud immediately suffers 2d4 damage to their exposed skin per round (cloth is a sufficient barrier). If the target fails a Reflex save (DC 13), they accidentally inhale the caustic gas and suffer 2d6 damage to their respiratory system. If they escape the cloud, they continue suffering 1d4 damage until they can make a successful Fortitude save (DC 15).

Cost: \$125/dose

Duration: 3d4 rounds

Reliability: 2

Speed: 1 round

Patent Holder: The Collegium

Malfunctions

Minor: The gas is partially effective. It inflicts half damage only.

Major: The gas is inert and only obscures vision (-2 to all rolls made within the cloud).

Catastrophe: The bottle breaks in the owner's grip, engulfing him in the cloud of noxious vapors.

Choking Gas

Effect: This bottle contains choking gas, one dose of which expands into a cloud 30 feet in diameter. Each additional dose increases the range by 15 feet. Anyone within the gas automatically suffers -5 to all rolls.

At the beginning of each round the gas is in effect, the target must also make a Fortitude save (DC 16) while in the affected area. Failure means the target suffers -10 to all rolls and takes 1d6 in subdual damage from the airborne irritant. If the targets leave the affected area, they still suffer 1d4 subdual damage from the gas in their lungs until they succeed in their saving throw or the gas' duration ends.

Cost: \$90/dose

Duration: 2d6 rounds

Reliability: 2

Speed: Instantaneous

Patent Holder: Smith & Robards

Malfunctions

Minor: The gas is not as effective; a failed save only incurs a -5 penalty to all actions.

Major: The gas is more potent, inflicting 2d6 damage instead of subdual damage on a failed Fortitude save.

Catastrophe: The gas is more potent, inflicting 3d6 damage instead of subdual damage on a failed Fortitude save.

Enfeebling Powder

Effect: When ingested, this powder weakens the drinker, forcing him to make a Fortitude save (DC 18). Failure means the victim loses 1d6 Constitution and 1d6 Strength.

Cost: \$20/dose

Duration: 4 hours

Reliability: 3

Speed: Instantaneous

Patent Holder: Smith & Robards

Malfunctions

Minor: The powder inflicts 3d6 subdual damage.

Major: The powder inflicts 3d6 damage.

Catastrophe: The powder actually has the opposite effect, temporarily increasing the so-called victim's Constitution and Strength (1d6 each).

Greased Lightning Pills

Effect: Each pill boosts the hero's reaction time (for Initiative and Reflex saves) by +2.

Cost: \$30/pill

Duration: 1 round

Reliability: 3

Speed: 1d6 rounds

Patent Holder: Smith & Robards

Malfunctions

Minor: The adrenaline rush is too much, giving the user the jitters and -2 to all Initiative and Reflex saves.

Major: The character's reactions are too fast and jittery, robbing him of 1d4 Dexterity.

Catastrophe: The character is addicted to the pills, and must take them once a day; otherwise he suffers -2 to Initiative and Reflex saves. This condition lasts for 4 months if the user wants to "kick the habit." Taking the pill again is enough to reintroduce the addiction.

Healing Unguent

Effect: This elixir is a potent healing salve. When rubbed over a wound, it restores 1d10 Hit Points.

Cost: \$80/dose

Duration: Permanent

Reliability: 3

Speed: 10 minutes

Patent Holder: Smith & Robards

Malfunctions

Minor: An allergic reaction inflicts 1d6 subdual damage.

Major: The balm does not work, and the patient must make a Fortitude save (DC 10) or develop an infection.

Catastrophe: The ointment burns the wound, inflicting an additional 3d6 damage.

Lethe Water

Effect: Anyone who drinks this liquid forgets the events that occur over the elixir's duration. Trying to remember the events requires a Will save (DC 18), and even then, the memories are disjointed and partial.

Cost: \$70/dose

Duration: 2d4 hours

Reliability: 2

Speed: 1 round

Patent Holder: Smith & Robards

Malfunctions

Minor: The elixir only nauseates the drinker, who must make a Fortitude save or (DC 15) or throw up (suffering 1d6 subdual damage).

Major: Lessened effect; the drinker can remember events on a Will save (DC 12) more clearly.

Catastrophe: The drinker has photographic memory over the elixir's duration.

Restoration Elixir

Effect: When imbibed, the patient makes a Fortitude save (DC 10). Success restores 1d4 levels of Hit Points including Constitution bonuses (mad scientists and mavericks would roll d6s worth of 1d4 levels, while a rowdy would roll d10s).

Cost: \$150/dose

Duration: Permanent

Reliability: 3

Speed: 10 minutes

Patent Holder: Smith & Robards

Malfunctions

Minor: The elixir causes 1d6 in subdual damage.

Major: The healing works but the patient falls in a coma for 1d6 hours.

Catastrophe: The accelerated healing causes a heart attack. The patient loses 1d10 Constitution (which return at a rate of 1 per week) and 1d8 Strength (same return rate).

Sampson's Elixir

Effect: This elixir improves the drinker's Strength by +2 for each dose.

Cost: \$60

Duration: 10 minutes

Reliability: 2

Speed: 1 round

Patent Holder: Smith & Robards

Malfunctions

Minor: The drinker loses fine control and suffers -2 to all Dexterity related rolls.

Major: The unfortunate hero suffers 2d6 subdual damage.

Catastrophe: The character suffers a negative reaction to formula and loses -2 Strength.

Smoker's Gun

Effect: Smokers often engrave their guns with a variety of alchemical solutions mixed with melted gold (the symbol of immortality or longevity in some cultures). This creates firearms with beautiful, shimmering, and elaborate patterns, helping Smokers identify one another, as well as improving the gun in some capacity.

Generally, Smokers employ one to three engraving processes (called Rune-Formulas) on their weapons. They each last one year:

1. **Protection Against Malfunctions:** This treatment improves the weapon's (or chambered ammunition's) reliability by 1. It also incurs no Reliability penalties.
2. **Wind Pushes the Bullet:** This treatment puts extra spin on the bullet, adding to its punching power by +2 damage.
3. **Kissed by Fortune:** This treatment improves the shot's accuracy by +2.

Cost: \$150 (per Rune Formula engraving), \$500 (three Rune Formulas and gun included).

Duration: 1 year each

Reliability: 1 per treatment unless otherwise stated. All three together are Reliability 1 (which is always the minimum). The shooter rolls once for one or more treatments.

Speed: NA

Patent Holder: Shan Fan Hazard Free West Ltd

Malfunctions

Minor: The engraving fails. There are no bonuses to this shot.

Major: Fortunes are reversed and the bonuses turn into penalties against the shooter.

Catastrophe: The engravings fade prematurely and the gun falls apart.

Smoke Pellets

Effect: By throwing or crushing a smoke pellet, the hero creates a 30-foot diameter cloud that obscures vision. Anyone within the cloud, or folks outside trying to peer in, suffers -10 to

all rolls requiring perception. In windy conditions, air currents disperse the smoke within 1d4 rounds, but that could be more than enough time to plan a getaway, reload a weapon, or seek cover—provided your opponent doesn't come in the cloud looking for you.

Cost: \$5/pellet

Duration: 1 minute

Reliability: 3

Speed: Instantaneous

Patent Holder: The Collegium





Smoker's Wacky Tobacco

Effect: In addition to their numerous alchemy tricks, Smokers also specialize in specially treated tobaccos, which they smoke from ornate pipes. When working against those unfamiliar with Smokers, this often allows them to put one over on their opponents.

These mirror the illusion and enchantment spells found in the *Player's Handbook*, but require time and patience to manufacture (like any elixir, use the process described in Chapter Two). Few illusion/enchantment spells are above 3rd Level because of the cost and investment in research. The Smokers know and can create the spell effects listed in the Tobacco Spells Table below.

Cost/dose: \$20 (Level 0), \$50 (Level 1), \$100 (Level 2), \$100/level (Level 3+)

Duration: Varies

Reliability: 2

Speed: Varies

Patent Holder: Shan Fan Hazard Free West Ltd

Malfunctions

Minor: The spell is half as effective as normal.

Major: The spell fails to materialize.

Catastrophe: Another spell manifests (exactly what is up to the Marshal's discretion) and affects the Smoker.

Tobacco Spells

Level	Name
0	Daze Ghost Sound
1	Change Self Charm Person Silent Image Sleep
2	Blur Invisibility Minor Image Tasha's Hideous Laughter
3	Displacement Suggestion

Malfunctions

Minor: The cloud is lighter than expected, incurring only a -5 penalty to perception-based actions.

Major: The gas contains a mild irritant, and functions like a half-strength Choking Gas cloud.

Catastrophe: The cloud is caustic. see Caustic Vapors for more information.

Weapons

Weapon	Damage	Critical	Range Increment	Wt.	Shots	Cal.	Type
Acid Gun	3d6	19-20/x3	5ft	25 lb.	15	-	Special
Electrostatic:							
Knife	3d6*	19-20/x2	NA	2 lb.	Special	-	S
Saber	3d6*	19-20/x3	NA	5 lb.	Special	-	S
Flash Gun	Special	NA	Special	10 lb.	6	-	Special
Gatling Shotgun	1d6-4d6	19-20/x2	30ft	40 lb.	15	12 ga	P
Grapple Gun	2d4+2	19-20/x2	10ft	10 lb.	100	-	P
Lightning Gun	3d6	19-20/x3	7ft	11 lb.	Special	-	Special
Net Gun	2d10**	19-20/x2	5ft/75ft**	11 lb.	1	.50-.70	P**
Quickdraw Cannon	5d12	19-20/x4	150ft	400 lb.	3	-	AP
Smoker's Gun	varies	varies	varies	varies	varies	varies	varies
Sonic Destabilization Ray	2d6	20/x2	10ft	40 lb.	20	-	Special

*Subdual damage variant. Normal damage as per *Players Handbook*

**Piercing damage from rounds. See specific entry for more information.

THE
MARSHAL'S
HANDBOOK







CHAPTER FOUR: OF MICE AND CLOCKWORK MEN

It's coming to the point where you can't throw a stick in the Weird West without hitting a mad scientist or an invention. There's a reason for that. Most independent tinkerers are trying to stay clear of the Civil War, and the only places you can accomplish that is out west, far south, or in the British north. Secondly, with ghost rock in high demand, many scientists are worrying that the supply lines thin out the further east one travels. It's a valid concern, mind you. The Union and Confederacy often confiscate the rock for the war effort if the need demands it, and scientists are the first to suffer. Instead, many prefer to remain closest to supplies of the wonder mineral, and many, closer still to such notables as Smith & Robards, Hellstromme, and the Collegium.

Groups of mad scientists are springing up faster than dandelions after a heavy rain; you need a scorecard just to keep up with all the deranged inventors roaming the Weird West. Well, this chapter gives you the skinny on some of the more notable gadgeteers among them.

The following gents and ladies represent the pinnacle of research, development, and in some cases, groups. If the Marshal uses them as antagonists, remember these folks are often poor combatants themselves. More often, they rely on toadies, contraptions, heavy defenses, allies, or all of the above to protect themselves from harm.

The Confederates

There are no saints in war, and the Confederacy is going out of its way to prove that. In their defense, it's got more to do with President Davis than many of the honest folks down south. Davis is a doppelganger doing its best to prolong the war and make it as bloody as possible. Why? Because major developments arise during times of conflict, and the Civil War has seen technological advancements almost a century ahead of its time. So, President Davis is allowing for the development and construction of heinous devices like chlorine-gas bombs and patchwork legions, knowing that each advancement is a step towards apocalypse.

The Confederacy conscripts almost all mad scientists operating in the southern states, relegating the smartest and brightest to their Roswell base in New Mexico. The less skilled find themselves mass building from tried and true blueprints (not of their design) in factories and secret ranches scattered across Texas, Louisiana, and the Mississippi. After the attack on the Roswell base, President Davis learned not to put all his eggs in one basket. Instead he uses the Roswell base to develop the latest, and nastiest, contraptions for the war effort. Once the Confederacy tests these designs, they



Miss Sarah Jackson

The chilly and unresponsive Miss Sarah Jackson strikes most folks as an embittered Sunday School marm and not one of President Davis' deadliest mad scientists. In fact, few people know of her role or the esteem in which the Confederacy holds her. Born and raised in Waco, Texas along the banks of the Brazos River, Miss Jackson was among the first women who graduated from venerable Baylor University in medicine.

Between her stringent Baptist upbringing and her father's near totalitarian rule over their ranch's household, however, Miss Jackson was aloof, demanding, and domineering. She was as stubborn as a mule, and some say about as pretty. Needless to say, it surprised most folks when she married Jeremy Jackson, Waco's most eligible bachelor, and bore him two healthy sons. Most folks figured Jeremy either had his eye on Sarah's estate, or her father bribed Jeremy something fierce.

When the Civil War erupted, Jeremy went to fight for the Confederacy, while Sarah volunteered to help nurse the wounded like the other 2,000 brave women of that era. During her tenure on a battlefield, she witnessed her share of war wounds and amputations, but throughout the process, she remained unflinching and seemingly unmoved by the suffering surrounding her. She displayed none of Florence Nightingale's, Dorothea Dix's, and Clara Barton's compassion as nurses. In fact, one story goes she patched up her own husband three different times one night, each time sending him back out to fight because he wasn't wounded badly enough—he didn't survive a fourth time.

Sarah met the imposter President Davis in '72. While touring the field hospitals, Davis encountered the indifferent Sarah ignoring her patient's cries while she amputated his gangrenous leg. Sarah then argued with the doctor about trying to give him a new leg from a fresh corpse so they could send him out to fight again. Impressed by her callous demeanor and recognizing a mad scientist in the making, President Davis transferred Sarah Jackson to another field hospital, where she was allowed to "patch" soldiers together without interference from her colleagues.

Unfortunately, his experiments and tests frightened the other doctors, so President Davis transferred her back to her ranch in Waco. He sent her all the equipment she would need for her experiments and even subsidized her return to school to study other scientific and paranormal disciplines.

Since that time, Miss Sarah Jackson has become proficient in constructing monstrous contraptions like the Barbwire Golem. Her greatest achievement, however, has been in building patchwork creations using her own sons who have died and returned multiple times on the battlefields. Jackson believes it's all in service to the South, and she fully supports President Davis. In fact, following her success in reanimating her sons, she is discussing plans to create entire patchwork units to fight for the South. The Reckoners are quietly chuckling to themselves.

store the blueprints in a vault in Jackson, Mississippi. Partial copies are sent to secondary bases to mass-produce individual gizmo components.

Using the assembly line mentality across Louisiana and the Mississippi, none of the smaller factories ever see the bigger picture or know the specifics of the contraption being built. They assemble one portion of the design, before sending it to Jackson's Utopia Panacea base, where engineers put all the parts together. This hydra or decentralization approach to development and construction prevents spies from ever crippling the entire process by uncovering one segment. Still, that doesn't prevent the North from trying to find the various Confederacy bases or steal blueprints.

This fate isn't indicative of all mad scientists in the wild South. Quite a few work secretly and independently in underground communities while others are loyal, or unhinged, enough that President Davis offers them special dispensations to operate in private labs. These latter folks are perhaps the most dangerous because they have few fears when it comes to designing items or inventions of horrific intent.

Barbwire Golem

Large Construct

Sarah's Barbwire Golem is a unique construct of which perhaps only six were built. Standing at nine feet tall, the automaton is encased in a thick layer of wound barbwire that protects the ghost rock generator. In fact all one can see of the faceless automaton is the sharp barbwire and the steam escaping from between the coils. Additionally, Sarah built the Barbwire Golem with a series of simple logic gates using electrical pathways, allowing it to obey up to six simple and prioritized commands. If two commands conflict, the initial one takes precedence. The commands may include: Kill intruders, come when summoned, capture the target, etc. One additional command always hard-coded into the automaton as a primary directive is "Always obey Sarah Jackson and President Davis."

Hit Dice: 14d10+6 (83 hp)

Initiative: -1 (Dex)

Speed: 20 ft. (can't run)

AC: 23 (-1 size, -1 Dex, +15 natural)

Hardness: 10

Attacks: 2 slams, +14 melee/ or 1 grapple, +14 melee

Damage: Slam: 2d10+7 (+1d6 piercing), Grapple: 1d6 (piercing)

Face/Reach: 5ft. by 5ft./10 ft.

Special Attacks: Ensnare Target

Special Qualities: Construct, magic immunity, damage reduction 20/+1

Saves: Fort +3, Ref +2, Will +2

Abilities: Str 25, Dex 9, Con —, Wis 10, Int —, Cha 1

Skills: None

Feats: None

Climate/Terrain: Any

Organization: Single

Challenge Rating: 10

Treasure: None

Alignment: Neutral

Reliability: 3

Combat

Ensnare Target: What's the use of encasing an automaton in barbwire if you're not going to use it to your advantage. The golem can ensnare multiple targets, one per wire coil, similar in effect to the Animate Rope spell (*Player's Handbook*, page 174). The only differences in this instance being the metal coil has 10 hit points, AC 14, and can be burst with a Strength check (DC 35). Additionally, the wire inflicts 1d4 piercing damage per round from the wire spurs and thrashing about. The golem also prefers grappling opponents (see *Player's Handbook*, page 137), inflicting 1d6 piercing damage per round on successful grabs from the barbs. It can also slam opponents.

Malfunctions

Minor: The golem trips over a loose wire-coil, and loses 2 rounds returning to its feet. Each round, until the owner snips the coil or tightens it back into its body, the golem must make a Reflex Save (DC 10) or trip again.

Major: The logic gates snap, erasing 1d6 stored commands. Determine randomly, excluding Miss Jackson's "prime directive." The device must be "reprogrammed," requiring a Tinkerin' check (DC 20).

Catastrophe: The automaton is not venting steam properly and the ghost rock generator is overheating. The golem explodes in 1d4 rounds (people around the creature should notice the barbwire coils glowing red from the escaping heat) and inflicts 4d10 in piercing shrapnel damage to anyone within a 10-foot radius. Every five feet after that decreases the damage by 1d10.

The Union

Again, this war has no saints or saviors, but the Union is trying damn hard to find alternative solutions to the current problems. President Grant has the good fortune of relying on the advice and testimony of The Ghost, better known as the late Abraham Lincoln. The Ghost understands the woes facing the nation given his condition, and he knows the folly of pursuing certain avenues of investment the way President Davis is doing. Technology is fast ruling the lives of men and women, and while the Union recognizes the dangers of relegating self-determination to contraptions, the South's newest weapons of mass destruction harry them at every turn.

The Union claims to pursue scientific advancement responsibly, and only with an eye toward circumventing the CSA's technological edges. Hogwash. The Union is perhaps more trustworthy given President Grant isn't an evil doppelganger parading around as president, but they're just as willing to push certain conventions if it means winning the war against both the British and Confederates. Their base at Fort 51 is churning out weapons of mass destruction just efficiently as the South, though President Grant is perhaps more lenient towards mad scientists' freedoms.

Given President Grant's even-tempered political methodology, more mad scientists are willing to fight for the Union's cause. Folks like the mysterious Mr. Eddington in Fort 51 or Philadelphia's Edward Winter and his clockwork men are perhaps the Union's best hope for state-of-the-art technology. Still, few folks compare with the world famous, Union sympathizer, Jacob Smith of Smith & Robards fame.

Dr. Jacob Smith

Jacob Smith emerged from the south—Charleston, South Carolina to be exact. After working for his father on the docks and displaying a mechanical aptitude for fixing things, Smith opened up his own business repairing and devising items for the port's shipbuilders. He was lucrative enough at his



craft to pay the bounty that steered him free of the Civil War draft, and later booked passage on a blockade-runner leaving Charleston.

Smith's reasons for leaving in '63 were somewhat politically motivated, but the truth of the matter was he envisioned devices beyond his technical means. Smith enrolled in the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, hoping to add to his stunted education, and came under the influence of a Professor Pennell. Pennell, an outcast among the faculty, taught Smith the art of "Instinctive Inventing," where intuition played a larger part in designing gadgets than the actual sciences did.

Pennell invited Smith to join him on his journey west in search of ghost rock. Smith accepted, but first decided to visit his ailing parents in Charleston, where the Texas Rangers approached him to work for the Confederacy. They painted such a rosy picture, Smith accepted their offer, not realizing the Roswell, New Mexico base was a harsh labor camp operating under draconian conditions. Smith engineered an escape, along with a handful of scientists, nearly blowing the Roswell base to smithereens with a ghost vapor explosion.

Smith and his ragtag band of scientists immediately set out west, where ghost rock was said to be plentiful, and eventually joined forces with Sir Clifton Robards after two years of enduring the lawless West. The meeting was auspicious, though it's doubtful either men knew it was history in the making until several years later when Smith & Robards turned mad science into a respectable business.

Despite his harrowing history, Smith remains an optimist and a firm believer in a utopia through scientific advancement. That said, he rebuffs any dealings with the Confederacy, even to the point of refusing to sell them his company's inventions. That, however, isn't a terrible issue since the Texas Rangers have a warrant for Smith's arrest over his part in the explosion at the Roswell base.

Most folks figure Smith prefers the Union because of what he endured at the CSA's hands. The truth is, however, Smith saw enough of Roswell and the Wild West to know he doesn't want the Rebels winning the war, nor does he want a lawless nation. The only choice for a secure government is the Union. Unfortunately, working for them full-time means building war machines, and Smith doesn't want to be a purveyor of death. He wants to invent whatever will better humanity, and that means working for himself.

Sir Clifton Robards

Raised in Norfolk, England, Robards shares much in common with Smith, especially in relation to his early childhood. Like Smith, Robards worked alongside his father, eventually running his own business (admittedly inherited from his father); like Smith, Robards also showed an aptitude in tinkering, and like Smith, he found himself in financial straits. Robards, however, used his shrewd business acumen to circumvent disaster. In fact, he amassed a fortune supplying Her Majesty's forces in India, which in turn garnered him contacts, favors, and the eventual honor of being knighted in 1859 (hence the "Sir" in his first name in case you're confused).

Unfortunately all this success brought Robards little happiness or even acceptance among the old money socialites of England. Instead, Robards craved more riches, and in fact believed his fortune lay in California, where ghost rock had been recently discovered. Robards booked passage to America, and found himself in California, where he met and befriended Smith.

The enterprise of Smith & Robards was born, though mostly on Robards' initiative. It was he who convinced Smith to open a laboratory, and he who handles the company's finances and the management as its chief investor. Unbeknownst to Smith, however, Robards is a businessman first and foremost, and he has little compunction when it comes to dealing with the Confederacy. Robards has already supplied the CSA with technology, a fact he keeps hidden from his often-preoccupied partner. How this revelation will affect their friendship remains unknown, but Robards' lust for greater financial success versus Smith's idealism will certainly clash at some point in the future.

The Collegium

This collection of scientists perhaps best exemplifies the spirit of independent thinking. The Collegium prides itself on remaining free of any political agenda save for the betterment of humanity, but they also miss the forest for the trees quite often, rarely acknowledging the impact of their inventions. They do not consider their contraptions a menace; they're only interested in advancing science towards the creation of a universal panacea. The few bumps, scrapes, and deaths along the way, while unfortunate, are to be expected.

Take Erik Zarkov, for example, and his Phlogostonic Deatomizer; most folks worry about a device that can reduce steel to dust in seconds, but the Collegium only sees the beneficial applications of such a contraption for mining or the precision shaping of seemingly impervious alloys. The device in question is never a goal, but another step forward for science. Mind you, the Collegium isn't completely blind either; they have, and will use their inventions to protect themselves and their installation. Their devices, while furthering science, also have their uses, and in the lawless West, those uses aren't so pretty.

Currently, the Collegium is in the process of rebuilding their beloved academy, though with admittedly heavier defenses. The incident in Gomorra was not some mass hallucination as stated publicly, but a world-shattering event in the manifestation of a powerful manitou named Knicknevin. The Collegium assisted in bringing the demon down, but at cost to several members, their irreplaceable inventions, and the academy itself. The Collegium is keeping its mouth shut about Knicknevin and going about business as usual. Unfortunately it isn't business as usual—it never will be either.

The sight of Knicknevin frightened the tar out of the Collegium, changing many of their strategies. They're now more willing to create devices of mass destruction if only to stop another occurrence like Knicknevin. Ironically, by building more powerful weapons and implements of destruction, they are contributing to the manitous and making it easier for them to manifest. Worse still, the Collegium has entered into negotiations with the infamous Darius Hellstromme, believing him their savior. Hellstromme is nothing such. He knows the scientists in the Collegium are far more willing to risk life and limb in pursuit of knowledge, and has convinced them to help him with Project Ghostfire.

What is Project Ghostfire you ask?

For all intents and purposes, it's a ghost rock version of a nuke—and even Hellstromme isn't sure about its exact effects.

Collegium Notables Roster

Oswald Hardinger: An exile from several prestigious universities back East, Hardinger formalized the loose collection of Gomorra's resident scientists into the Collegium, and has since served as its dean. He is the organization's heart and soul, though the conflict with Knicknevin nearly cost him of his life; exactly

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how remains a mystery, but Hardinger contracted a strange ailment that robbed him of the use of his legs; he was also subsequently bedridden following a stroke. He is recovering rapidly, but is currently confined to a wheelchair.

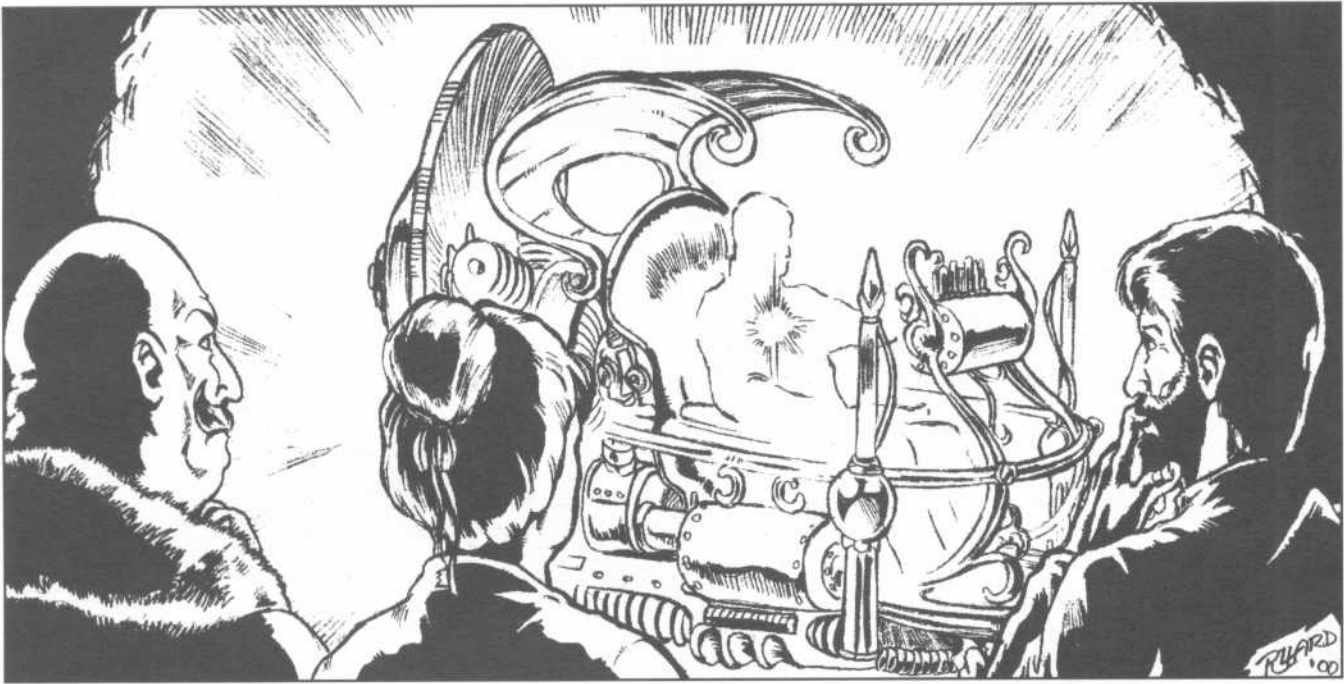
Gerald Klippstein: This Prussian inventor epitomizes the vanity that often accompanies many accomplished men and women of science. Klippstein was among the few contesting Hellstromme's admission into the Collegium, and saw the prestigious scientist as his chief rival. Still, despite his arrogance, Klippstein proved a competent and able administrator after Hardinger's stroke, and he is exceedingly loyal to the Collegium. Klippstein is currently delving into the biomedical sciences and alchemy in the hopes of replicating humans.

Marcus Perriwinkle: A former student and patient of Dr. Leonitus P. Gash, Perriwinkle is the resident expert on clockwork implants. In fact, out of all the inventors currently running around, only Gash and Perriwinkle have successfully replaced limbs and organs with technology, a success secretly owing to a miraculous compound called X-19. Perriwinkle, whose arm and leg are clockwork thanks to Gash—he has since parted ways with the insane tinkerer—has a cache of dwindling X-19 and no knowledge on how to duplicate the formula. The only Collegium member who knew about both Perriwinkle's secret compound and how to make more was Gunther Hapworth, and he died during the Knicknevin incident. Perriwinkle is now searching for a new ally skilled in alchemy and chemistry.

Dr. Bailey McDermott: Dr. McDermott isn't a bad guy, for a walking corpse. Actually, he tells folks it's a skin condition, but he's bonafide Harrowed and in control of his manitou. Most folks don't know the truth about his little "situation." Currently, McDermott is investigating Ghost Creek, where the local cattle have developed reptilian-like scales and a hankering for meat.

Professor Susan Franklin: An astronomer and founding member of the Collegium, Professor Franklin maintains an observatory on a nearby mesa, where she can spy on the stars and Gomorra. After seeing Knicknevin up close through her telescope, Franklin's hair turned snow white. She has since discussed the possibility of creating a beam weapon with Erik Zarkov, which she could use through her telescopes in case of "future problems."

Erik Zarkov: Zarkov, the son of immigrants, was raised in Brooklyn where he endured bullies and ruffians throughout his childhood. He has since come to champion the weak and oppressed, building weapons he believes are humane avenues to ending the Civil War, if not all wars. Zarkov is also an expert of light amplification and particle beams. He is



probably *the* authority when it comes to energy output weapons and technology—not that he's got a lot of competition in this field.

Alice Chamberlain: Miss Chamberlain is proof that mad science shows no preference for nationality, gender, or age. Don't be deceived by appearances, though. She may look like someone's grandmother, but how many grannies pack a Gatling shotgun, riding clothes, and a biting stare to shame the hardest criminals. Miss Chamberlain is a proponent of shotgun justice, and everyone knows what her shotgun does. She also hunts criminals, funding her experiments by collecting bounties.

The Phlogostonic Deatomizer

This is Zarkov's death ray, a testament to his skill and a frightening weapon indeed. It fires a concentrated beam of energetic particles that shred the atomic bonds holding matter together, effectively reducing the target to dust.

Fortunately, the device is bulky, requiring a backpack to carry and two hours to recharge.

Stats: Damage: 4d12, Critical: 19-20/x4, Range Increment: 5ft, Weight: 100 lbs., Shots: 20, Type: Special.

Malfunctions

Minor: The unit suffers a power drain that completely empties the power cell. It must be recharged.

Major: A short circuit prevents the device from firing, requiring a Tinkerin' skill check (DC 15) to rectify.

Catastrophe: The unit's power pack discharges right into the user for 4d12 damage. Ouch.

Steam and Spirit

As mentioned previously, mad science knows few boundaries, and the new men and women of steam may not be armed with technical know-how, but they are introducing a healthy helping of mysticism into the formula. The Smokers are proof of this new science's validity, with Hermetic, Taoist, and Sabian alchemy playing larger roles in people's understanding of cultural influences on technology and research. Perhaps more unusual, however, are the emerging Native American and Mexican tinkers relying on animist-style approaches to building contraptions and physics-defying gizmos.

Given the wide field of Native American belief systems, practices, and histories, it's almost impossible to quantify the different tribes and their approaches to life. Instead, there is one group, the Hopi, whose current forays into inventing exemplify the unique and individual approach of what some are calling "tribal" sciences.

While this term may offend the sensibilities of the so-called "educated," the fact is mad science is already partially fueled by magic through ghost rock and the manitous. Whether the formula is 25% magical or 75% magical, the end result is the same. Unlike "traditional" mad science, the tinkering of Native Americans does not involve consorting with manitous; spirits considered anathema by most respectable shamans.

If that's the case, you wonder, what then sets it apart from pure spellcasters like hexslingers and shamans? The process actually, as well as the medium. Hucksters and shamans both rely on themselves as the medium for power, while the wide field of tinkers use their understanding of laws and sciences to fuel the process and build the necessary conduit to apply that belief.

Hopi Science

Luke Wikvaya is believed to be the first Native American to follow the ways of mad science by completely ignoring the accepted conventions of tinkering. Several Native Americans tutored in the European or American education system have become inventors, but they generally follow the current principles of science. Wikvaya, instead, uses the rich Hopi culture to fuel his experiments and create such incredible wonders as clockwork *kachina* (spirits of life's invisible forces) called *ayáwamat* (one who follows orders), and a lightning-thrower named *hochichvi* after the lightning design.

Wikvaya comes from the Corn Clan, a group of Hopi charged by the *kachina* chief spirit, *Ahóli*, with the responsibility of ensuring the various tribes grow red, black, yellow, and white corn. This was a great task, for corn is both the staple of the Hopi, and the food given to them for survival following the destruction of each of the previous three worlds. The Hopi also believe the four corn colors represents the race of people who would come to them and live in friendship and unity, a prophesy seemingly fulfilled with the arrival of Europeans, Africans, and Chinese (with the Hopi representing the red corn).

Like many Hopi, Wikvaya is peaceful, but he is also a firm believer in the traditions of his people. He is hoping to bring the prophecy of coexistence to fruition, but realizes there is much work to accomplish. So, he's venturing out among his own people first in the hopes of learning from the four great clans (Bear, Badger, Eagle, and Parrot). Afterwards, he plans to approach the three peoples of the corn, and attempt reconciliation with each, thus bringing *Ahól's* predictions to fruition.

Wikvaya, however, is not blind though. He knows the world is a harsh and cruel one, and wonders if the Fourth World's destruction is upon them. It's for this reason he's building *ayáwamat* to protect the clans and teaching the others the way of his visions. Already the Hopi have two or three mad scientists emerging from their ranks. Wikvaya knows that he has a lot of work ahead of him, both with the people of the corn and among his own people—not all of them are open to his ideas.

Wikvaya is currently consulting with the Badger Clan that serves as keepers of the sacred spruce. The Badger Clan is also knowledgeable in the ways of all plants, and is teaching Wikvaya about the various flora and fauna, and their uses. Wikvaya also plans to visit Shan Fan, since the *kachinas* are said to reside in its peaks, and visit with Ton Tzu, the spiritual leader of the Smokers. Ton Tzu has consulted with the Hopi on more than one occasion.

Ayáwamat

Medium Construct

Wikvaya's automatons look like human-sized *kachina* dolls, though their actual appearance varies according to which spirit Wikvaya based them upon. Is it *Ahóte* the Restless One, or *Héhewúti* the Warrior Mother,

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or *Chúchip* the Deer? Their *kachina* depends on their function; *Héhewúti*, for example, is disheveled and has long hair (because she barely had to time to wake up before one epic battle), and acts as a guardian *kachina* with a bow and arrow. *Cha'kwaini*, on the other hand, who was shot with arrows and only muttered "hu-hu," serves as an early warning sentry at night.

Otherwise, the *ayáwamat* are all made from wood and alchemically treated muds. Ceremonial paint and costuming also festoon the automaton, while the eagle feathers hanging from its arms and head allow the creator to control and direct it. The innards, however, are a clockwork mess of cactus fibers, sheep bladders, spruce cogs, etc. Mad scientists may recognize some of the workings, but forget Reverse Engineering the contraption unless the tinkerer is familiar with Hopi (or which ever tribe created the design) culture.

These constructs serve as powerful guardians of the Hopi tribe. Wikvaya has instructed a number of like-minded shamans in their construction. Those who would take advantage of the Hopi have learned to their detriment the power of these shamanistic constructs.

Hit Dice: 8d10 (44 hp)

Initiative: -1 (Dex)

Speed: 30 ft. (can't run)

AC: 19 (-1 Dex, +10 natural)

Hardness: 8

Attacks: 2 slams, +10 melee or weapon +10
melee, +9 ranged

Damage: Slam: 2d8+5

Face/Reach: 5ft. by 5ft./5 ft.

Special Attacks: Weapons (club, bow & arrow, or flint knife)

Special Qualities: Construct, magic immunity, damage reduction 15/+1

Saves: Fort +3, Ref +2, Will +3

Abilities: Str 21, Dex 9, Con —, Wis 11, Int —, Cha 1

Skills: None

Feats: None

Climate/Terrain: Any

Alignment: Neutral

Challenge Rating: 17

Reliability: 3

Malfunctions

Minor: The spirits do not heed the controller's commands. The inventor must replace the eagle feathers.

Major: The tree resin holding components together deteriorates. The *ayáwamat* ceases functioning and must be repaired, requiring 1d4 hours of work.

Catastrophe: The spirits fight each other and the tribe they're supposed to be protecting. The *ayáwamat* goes on a rampage and attacks its owners. It won't stop until destroyed.





CHAPTER FIVE: RELICS

Face it folks, the Weird West tends to bless anything with enough venom or history to make a mark on society. Call it spontaneous benediction or a whammy, either way the "thing" in question is sporting some mighty mojo. This is truer for devices and items devised by mad scientists because they invent gadgets with the specific intent of impacting people's lives. When someone builds a gun, you know he built the gun to help folks defend themselves; but when he builds a spitter that shoots gobs of acid, he wasn't thinking about anything more than harming folks in the most agonizing way possible. Oh, he'll claim he did it to fight a salt rattler or some other creature, but he won't refute the fact it works real good on human flesh.

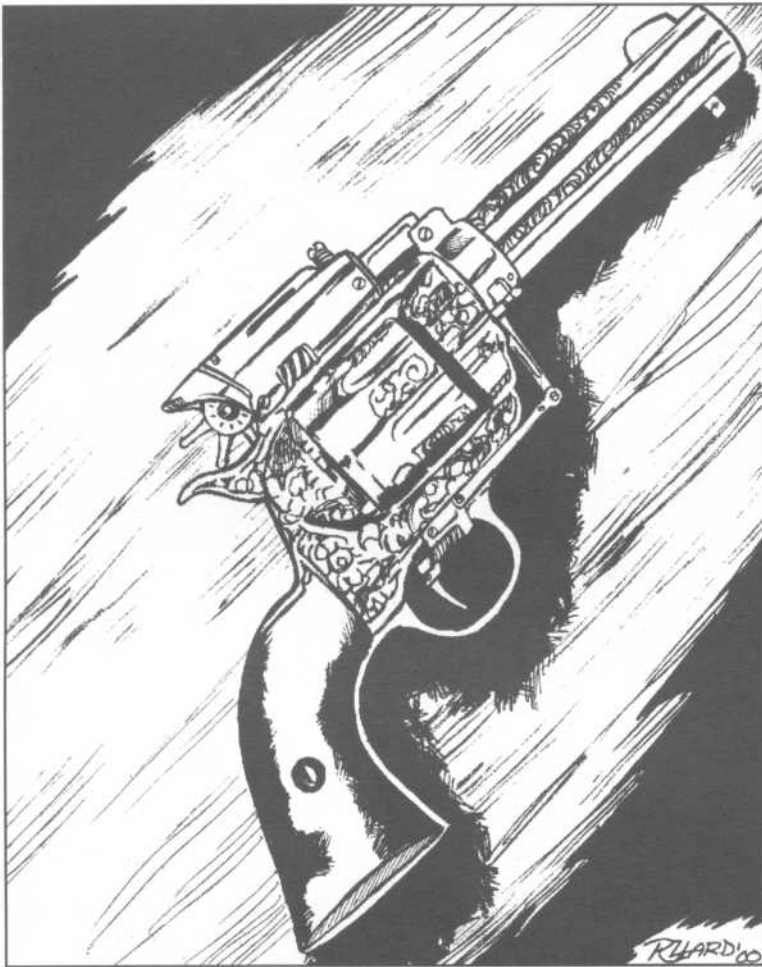
Mad science devices don't become relics on their own. They require the user to fuel them through reputation or action. Once that happens, the contraption works for the ages because the manitous rescind those silly little laws of physics. The power source is always active and burning, the ammo hot and infinite, and the clockworks running as smoothly as the day they assembled her. That said, reverse engineering the relic to figure out how it works fails—no arguments. Technological relics no longer operate on principles of science; they're magical devices through and through. That also means that certain

components carry power, so when the device is destroyed, scientists can transplant those parts into new devices (see Incorporating Relics in Chapter Two, page 23).

Burial Cameras

Unlike most relics, there's a handful of these devices floating around. It's common practice in this era to take pictures of the recently deceased in their death repose and burial finery. When the Wild West became the Weird West, however, these cameras sometimes photographed the wrong picture, and in doing so, some became relics. They caught a glimpse of the manitou hovering about the deceased or even a doorway into the afterlife that never shut properly. Needless to say, with that gander into the beyond, the camera now records events in a different light entirely. It photographs the grim future.

Power: Burial camera relics photograph the subject's fate, though the still-shot vision only manifests when the photographer develops the film. This is entirely a Marshal controlled device since the photo is of events yet to come, and usually the most dramatic events at that. The incident in question is strongly negative or violent enough to register on film as a ghost image overlapping the subject. If the person is going to suffer a piercing



wound, for example, the picture shows a bloodstain overlapping their face or chest. Additionally, the image relates an event to unfold in the near future, but rarely reveals the specifics. It may show tear marks for an encounter with a clawed critter or a glowing eye in the background for some supernatural fracas. Again, this is all up to the Marshal to decide upon.

Taint: The question is, however, does the camera relate future events, or curse the subject by arranging a horrible fate for him. It could be a combination of the two.

Dr. Meister's Suturing Thread and Needle

According to the tales, Dr. Wilma Meister, the first doctor to create a viable patchwork human, used this suturing thread and needle to stitch her first creation together. Somehow, her initial success turned the two items into a single relic, though how they found their way out of her lab remains a mystery. The spool of suturing thread never thins or runs out.

Power: When a scientist uses this relic to manufacture a patchwork creature, he gains +10 to his Knowledge (Biology) Skill Check against the appropriate DC. If used on a recently inflicted piercing wound (where the patient hasn't healed the damage yet), the person must succeed in a Knowledge (Biology) Skill Check (DC 10) to heal that wound instantly (or heal 2d4, 2d6, 2d8, 2d10, or 2d20 damage; whichever is more appropriate to the original source of the injury).

Taint: The wound never heals over the thread, which in turn never dissolves. Instead it develops into an ugly scar obviously held together by suturing string. If the wound is visible, it reduces the patient's Charisma-based skill checks by -1.

The Holy Wheel Gun

Augustus Hawthorne, a pious man and member of the Collegium, was found dead in his lab on the morning he completed the Holy Wheel Gun. Hawthorne built the sidearm to contend with the darkness and evils of the Weird West, but it vanished soon after its inventor's death. This relic looks like a modified Army revolver with "The Right Hand of God" carved into one side. It uses standard ammunition, but when fired, the bullets glow, streaking towards the target like God's lightning bolt.

Powers: While the gun works normally against mortal targets, it inflicts 4d6+2 damage against anything supernatural, including ghosts, Harrowed, abominations, and any other critter Noah pushed off the Ark as unnatural. Additionally, anything slain with this relic cannot be brought back by any means. They are dead—end of story. This even applies to critters who normally can't be killed, like ghosts and certain abominations such as the Hangin' Judges.

Taint: The relic's owner must hunt down and slay anything "unnatural" if he's aware it exists in the vicinity or sees it. The owner may fight this urge with a Will Save (DC 15), but that only staves off the obligation for 1d20 rounds. After that, he can reroll or walk into the situation with gun a' blazing.

Blessed characters seem drawn to this artifact. Have any such heroes make Wisdom checks (DC15) whenever they come within 20 feet of this artifact. A hero who succeeds senses the gun's power and is drawn to its location—lucky him.

The Monocle Automaton

Hard as it is to believe, but there's an automaton running around the Weird West with its dead inventor, Tobias Horton, rotting away inside the hull. Built in the Confederate's secret base in New Mexico before the assault on Washington, Horton tried escaping by hiding inside the Monocle Automaton. A lucky Confederate bullet killed him on the spot, turning the automaton into a relic and allowing it to run willy nilly across the West. (Okay, it can't run and "willy nilly" is not a term normally associated with automatons, but you get the idea.) Nobody has been able to corral the damn thing, but if someone manages to

climb aboard and dump Horton's body outside, they can assume control of this powerful device.

Power: The automaton is a walking tank with armor and a single "gun." The weapon in question is a focusing lens instead of the head, hence the term "monocle." This potent and chemically treated lens is in fact several curved magnifying glasses bunched up together real tight to focus sunlight into an intense beam of destructive light. Anything caught in its path fries like ants.

Fortunately, the automaton only activates this weapon through minute shifts in the lenses when endangered, which means it isn't always active. Additionally, partially cloudy or light overcast days halve the potential damage, while heavy overcast or nighttime prevents the weapon from firing. That, however, is when the unit's prodigious strength comes into play.

Currently, the Monocle Automaton seems intent on running (okay, galumping) across the Weird West and little else. Folks figure it's because Horton's last command was run, and being dead and all has prevented him from rectifying the situation. The automaton only stops to regain its power or fight any damn fool who crosses its path. Otherwise it uses the Construct rules in the *Monster Manual* (page 5) for abilities and limitations.

Hit Dice: 11d10+6 (61 hp)

Initiative: 0 (Dex)

Speed: 30 (cannot run)

AC: 21 (-1 size, +12 natural)

Hardness: 12

Attacks: Pummel (once per round) or Light Beam (once per round)

Damage: 2d6+7 (pummel)/ 4d10 (burning)

Face/Reach: 5ft. by 5ft./10 ft.

Saves: Fort -, Ref +3, Will +4

Abilities: Str 25, Dex 10, Con -, Int -, Wisdom 8, Cha 8

Skills: None

Feats: None

Challenge Rating: 10

Treasure: None

Alignment: Neutral

Taint: This artifact has an effective Reliability rating of 3, but instead of breaking down, it inflicts 1d6/per severity of the malfunction in piercing damage. Thus a Catastrophic malfunction incurs 3d6 damage against the user. The reason is because the artifact's owner is feeling the damage of the Confederate bullet that killed Horton. Call it sympathetic pains.

The Onyx Catalogue

The Onyx Catalogue derives its name from the thick sheet of rough-cut onyx serving as the cover and backboard. Rings of bronze bind the sheets to the covers, but the pages are impossible rip out, scuff, or mark. Nobody is sure who fashioned this bit of devilry, but the more superstitious mad scientists tell of its existence in hushed whispers. They say that when a scientist successfully constructs a terrible device or invention capable of widespread misery, the Onyx Catalogue appears on their doorstep the next day, no matter their location. The catalogue contains schematics,

formulas, dissection illustrations, principles, and theories unknown or lost to mankind. The material within the book is far beyond the acumen of the modern technology, and speaks of devices too fantastic to build normally. The catalogue, however, offers practical approaches to these so-called super-sciences, allowing the mad scientist to almost build whatever his fancy chooses. Of course, the price for this knowledge is both great and horrible.

Power: Anyone who receives the Onyx Catalogue must have constructed and successfully used an implement of mass destruction or deleterious effect. Reading the catalogue for three days improves the scientist's principle Knowledge by +10 when related to building devices of harm. This bonus lasts for as long as the relic remains in the scientist's care, and does not apply to Knowledge's other uses (like Reverse Engineering).

Taint: Unfortunately, each contraption the inventor completes using the catalogue also imparts one automatic Dementia. The book vanishes (when nobody is looking) if the inventor goes completely insane, or if he tries to dispose of it, destroy it, or sell it.





Bits n' Pieces

Mad science machines eventually break down, but when that device is a relic, the scientist can scavenge its parts for other contraptions. Here are a few destroyed relics whose components are floating around for the Tinkerin'.

Parts From the Cauldron

The Cauldron is the current conflict gripping the Rail Wars. With so many trains, cargoes, equipment, and lives being lost in this twisted version of the Civil War meets Battle Royal, the number of relics being generated is insane and frightening. Tinkerers venturing out into a rail battlefield are sure to find components for their devices. Some might even be relics.

Power: Certain components scavenged from the rail wars double the output of items in terms of damage, charges, speed, range, or effect.

Taint: Because the device is doubling output, the item's Reliability rating is doubled as well.

Parts From Hellstromme's Train

Not that long ago, Hellstromme built a special train and took it on a little jaunt into Hell in search of his dear departed wife's soul. Due to an unexpected stowaway on the train, it didn't reach its intended destination in Hades and the trip was a bust. Hellstromme and his men barely made it back to the land of the

living in one piece—the stowaway still resides in the infernal regions. The train itself was used for further experiments and then put to work on Hellstromme's Wasatch railroad. The locomotive and cars are now scattered around the Weird West on various railroad sidings.

Mad scientists in the know occasionally pilfer pieces from the train when they can find a portion of it. Pieces of the train (or what the seller claims are pieces, buyer beware) occasionally appear on the market. Actual components from this train—which drove through the fires of Hell—have remarkable properties.

Power: When used as part of a transportation device, these parts grant the scientist a +5 bonus to his Tinkerin' check to construct the gizmo. The device itself has its range and speed doubled. However, if the device ever suffers a catastrophic malfunction, it opens a portal to Hell (the Deadlands portion of the Hunting Grounds) and the device and anyone aboard it are instantly transported there.

The parts can also be used in devices that deal with fire. Fire-based weapons using a piece from the train have their range increment and damage doubled. In this case, however, if the device suffers a catastrophic malfunction, it is destroyed in a fiery blast that does twice the weapon's already enhanced with a Burst Radius of 20 feet. Out of this fiery blast emerges a demon made manifest who attacks the user and anyone who attempts to aid him (see below for the demon's stats).

The parts also work in devices that protect the user from fire. Any such device grants a +6 bonus to saving throws made against fire-based damage. A catastrophic malfunction in this area causes the device and anyone holding or wearing it to burst into flame. The unfortunate victim is engulfed in actual flames from Hell. He takes 4d10 damage each round. A successful Will save (DC20) halves this damage. The flames cannot be extinguished by any normal

means. They continue to burn until the victim is killed or he succeeds at three consecutive Will saves. Anyone reduced below 0 hit points by these flames immediately collapses into a pile of ash and his soul is whisked away to the bowels of Hell, never to be seen again (unless his friends are foolish enough to attempt a rescue).

Taint: What, the malfunctions above not nasty enough for you?

Manifested Demon (Manitou)

Large Outsider

Hit Dice: 9d8+27 (67 hp)

Initiative: 0 (Dex)

Speed: 30 ft.

AC: 26 (-1 size, +17 natural)

Attacks: Bite +13 melee, 2 claws +8 melee

Damage: Bite 4d4+5, claw 1d6+2

Face/Reach: 5ft. by 5ft./10 ft.

Special Attacks: Improved grab, Fiery Body

Special Qualities: Damage reduction 20/+2, SR 23

Saves: Fort +9, Ref +6, Will +8

Abilities: Str 21, Dex 10, Con 17, Int 14, Wisdom 14, Cha 14

Skills: Concentration +15, Hide +14, Listen +22, Move Silently +12, Search +14, Spellcraft +14, Spot +22

Feats: Blind-fight, Cleave, Power Attack

Challenge Rating: 12

Treasure: None

Alignment: Chaotic Evil

Combat

Fiery Body: The demon's body crackles with flames from Hell. Anyone grappled by the creature suffers 2d8 damage each round that he remains in contact with the demon.

Parts From the Richmond Air Battle

The air battle over Richmond changed the frontiers of the Civil War forever, and many Confederate ornithopters and Union air carriages fell from the sky that night. The sight of terror raining down from the heavens and the twisted metal coffins that claimed many a life turned components from several crashed flying machines into relics.

Power: When in the scientist's possession, these relics fill the inventor's mind with flying machines, giving him +10 towards blueprint DC rolls involving machines of the air. Any contraptions using one of these relics also grants the scientist +10 towards their final Tinkerin' roll.

Taint: When the flying machine fails a Reliability check, the pilot must first succeed in a Drive check (DC 15) or the contraption crashes immediately. If the pilot succeeds, he may then roll for the standard malfunctions.

Parts From Suzy-309

Created by the Collegium's Robert Holmes, Suzy-309 is the giant automaton that sank the Maze Rats' pride and joy, the flagship *Typhoon*. Although Suzy-309 survived after the *Typhoon* rammed her, she did suffer some structural damage. Several components and pieces were

lost, thrown out, or replaced, but Holmes never realized those parts were now relics, as was Suzy-309; the role she played against the pirates immortalized the contraption for all eternity.

Power: Suzy-309 is a juggernaut, an immovable invention of prodigious strength as demonstrated in her battle against the Maze Rats. As such, her different parts impart a portion of that strength. Any exterior plating improves the invention's resistance to damage, bestowing a Hardness of 10. Each internal component improves the gadget's Reliability by +1 or improves output by 1d4 damage (or one additional hour of use, or six extra charges, etc.).

Taint: Thanks to Suzy-309's encounter and battle damage while in water, the benefits gained from the Relic Components are hindered near or in large bodies of salt water. The item's Hardness drops by 5 and Reliability decreases by -2 within 500 yards of a significant accumulation of water. In salt water, the item's Reliability falls by -5 and any Malfunctions are always catastrophic.





THE DEPTHS OF DESPAIR

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BURN BABY BURN...



That's exactly what you'll do if you don't pay strict attention to the insane blueprints, mad theories, and strange components of the Mad Scientists! For everyone knows their infernal devices are prone to spectacular and fiery malfunctions!

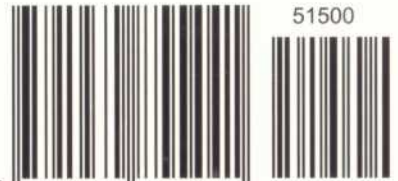
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