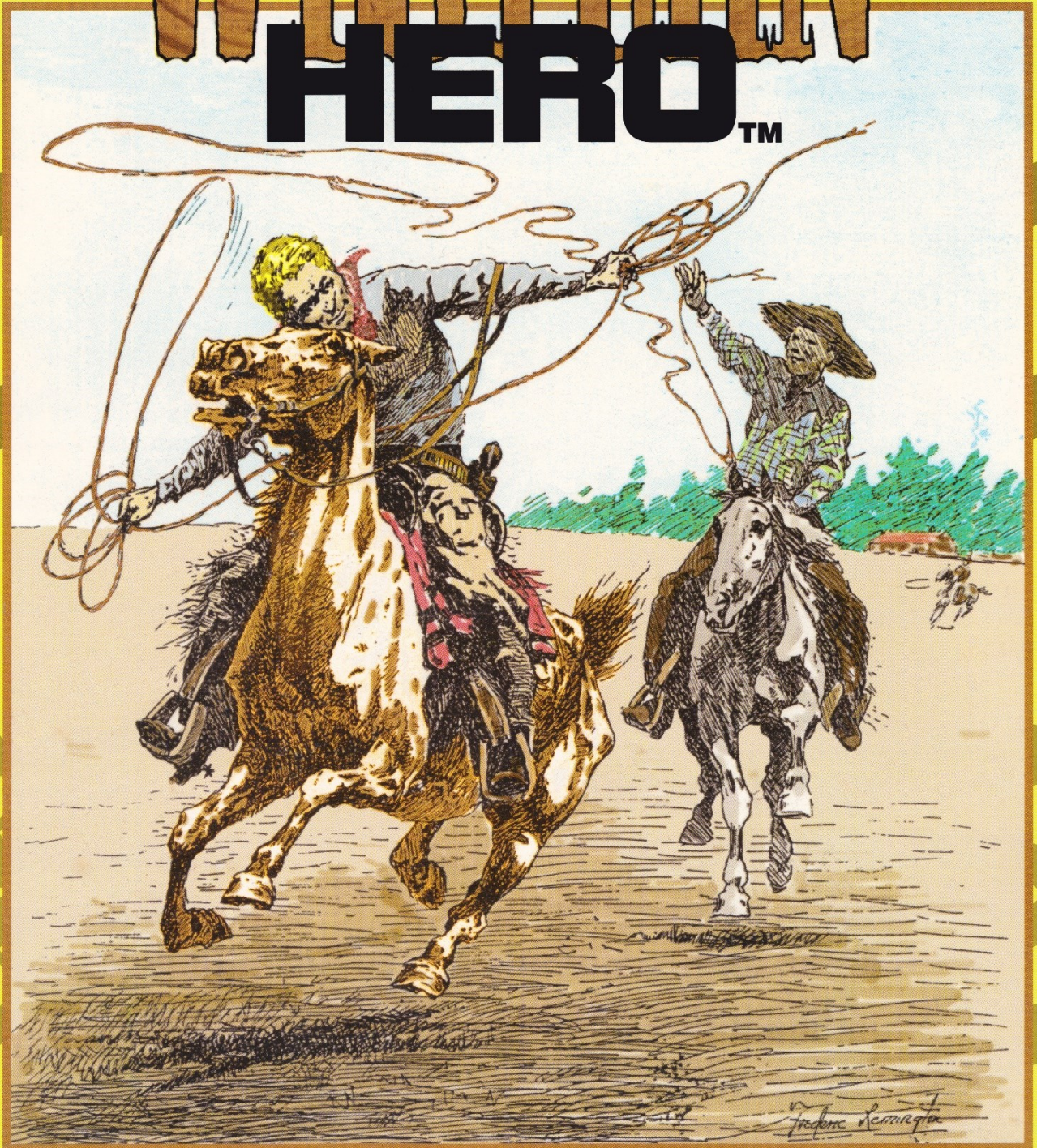


# WESTERN

# HERO<sup>™</sup>



By Matt Forbeck



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# WESTERN HERO<sup>TM</sup>

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To Mike Trudgeon, Steve Null and Steve Winter for some of the best *Boot Hill* games I ever played in.

To Will Niebling for getting me into this business.

To Bryan Winter, my partner, for putting other things on hold so I could work on this.

To my family, particularly my parents, for supporting me through all my «ahem» life experiences.

And to Ann—for everything.

Thanks.

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## About the Type

*Western Hero* is set in three type families: ITC Clearface, Ponderosa and Mesquite.

*ITC Clearface* is a licensed variation on a typeface originally designed by Morris Fuller Benton for American Type Founders in 1907.

*Ponderosa* and *Mesquite* are modern revivals of 19th century display typefaces, which were fashioned out of wood with a power router and pantograph. As of 1840, several firms specialized in the manufacture of wood type and it became the dominant form of type used in broadsides and posters. The typeface names are derived from trees common to the frontier.

## About the Illustrations

In the 19th century, illustrations in books and newspapers were printed by applying ink to an engraving. Frontier artists made sketches in the field of subjects they wished to illustrate before returning to a studio to tool the wood or metal block. In some cases, a publisher would enlist an engraver to etch the artist's illustration.

In *Western Hero* we use engravings made by several Western artists. These include Frederic Remington, who illustrated Theodore Roosevelt's book, *Ranch Life and the Hunting Trail*; Thomas Moran, A.C. Warren, W. Snyder, F. Schell, H.W. Troy and A. Will (whose works were produced by the engraving firm of Meeder & Chubb); and numerous anonymous artists not identified in the books in which their works appeared.

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# INTRODUCTION

The barroom fell silent as Clint and Logan Walker walked out of the chilly Arizona night and into the brightly lit saloon. After pausing for a moment at the doorway, the two cowboys ignored the staring patrons and strolled on in. Clint sat down at a nearby table, his back to the wall. Meanwhile, Logan sauntered over to the bar.

The younger Walker gave the pale-faced barman a hard look and, slapping some silver on the counter, ordered a bottle of cheap whiskey and three glasses. The weasel served it to him with shaking hands.

As Logan strode back to the table, a grizzled cowpoke, still covered in dust from the road, thrust a leg out into his path.

"Where d'ya think yer goin', boy?" said the cowboy, his voice harsh from cigarettes and liquor. Logan met the man's eyes with his own and then slowly looked over at Clint. He carefully tossed the bottle and glasses one at a time to his brother, who caught them neatly.

"You deaf?" rasped the man. "I said, where d'ya think yer going?"

Suddenly, Logan's foot lashed out and kicked the man's chair from underneath him. The cowpoke landed flat on his rump. The man scrambled to his feet, but before he could draw, he was staring down the barrel of Logan's Colt .45.

Logan motioned for the man to stand up, which he did. But his right hand still rested on his pistol's grip. Logan thumb-cocked his revolver as a dry smile slowly spread across his face.

Clint cleared his throat. "Wouldn't try that if I were you, mister," he warned. "Ol' Logan there, well, his temper's even quicker'n his draw."

The cowpoke snarled at Clint from beneath his matted bangs and then turned and spat at Logan's hand.

"Wrong thing to do," Clint muttered. Then Logan's pistol smashed into the man's jaw, knocking him sidelong across a nearby table which collapsed under his weight.

Almost immediately, a young, freckle-faced, red-headed man in a rawhide jacket stood up from where the table had been and took a swing at the younger Walker. Logan dodged beneath the blow and then drove his elbow into the boy's gut. The kid went down hard, coughing and gasping for air.

Suddenly, a shotgun blast shattered the air. Startled, Logan looked around. He was surrounded by angry men, all of their guns levelled at him. But none of their guns were smoking—the shot had come from above.

Clint spotted the gunman on the balcony and smiled inwardly. Undisturbed, he poured himself a shot of whiskey and then filled the other two glasses.

The grey-haired man on the balcony was strong and wiry, his long years on the range showing plainly on his weather-beaten face. He waved his shotgun meaningfully at Logan.

"What in tarnation's all the ruckus out here for?" he said in a low voice, through clenched teeth. No one breathed a word. He nodded at the kid, still kneeling on the floor.

"Johnny," he said, "what's this all about?"

"Well, sheriff, these two—" He stopped to swallow and catch his breath, pointing at the Walkers. "Um, well—don't you know who they are?"

The sheriff squinted in Logan's direction, then Clint's. Then he scrutinized them both again, as if expecting their features to change.

Suddenly, Clint spoke.

"Sheriff Black, I don't believe we've ever been properly introduced." He stopped and smiled at the corrupt lawman's vexed look. "My name's Clint—Clint Walker. And that there's my brother Logan."

Clint paused again, weighing his words. His demeanor was sober now. "We're Alexander Walker's sons."

Surprise and possibly fear crossed Black's face. Then he noticed his men watching him, and the queasiness in his stomach turned to anger.

"You two comin' here," he growled, "was a bad idea. You give me one good reason—just one—why I shouldn't put you six feet under."

Logan glanced over at Clint, who was beckoning him over to the table. Logan looked up at the shotgun and then walked over and sat down next to his brother, stepping over the unconscious cowpoke on his way. Clint cracked a grin.

"Mr. Black," he began, raising his glass, "I believe I can give you several such reasons. Now why don't you just put down that shotgun and come on over and join us for a drink so we can talk this out like civilized people?"

The lawman wavered for a moment. What in blazes were these two trying to pull?

"*La Cuidad de Oro* mean anything to you?" Clint asked, as if he were waving a raw steak in front of a starving dog.

Black hesitated for another second and then lowered his gun and set it down behind him. "Alright," he said, the hatred and frustration unmistakable in his voice, "let's talk."

Welcome to *Western Hero*! This book brings to you a wealth of information, everything you need to know to be able to run or play in a Western roleplaying game using the **HERO System** rules.

Shotguns and six-shooters, cowboys and Indians, outlaws and lawmen, devilishly clever plots and bar brawls, fiendish antagonists and romantic interests—this book has them all.



*Western Hero* gives you everything you need to know about adventuring in the United States of America, west of the Mississippi River during the 41 years between two significant historical events: the first run of the Pony Express in 1860 and the deaths of Butch Cassidy and the Sundance Kid in 1901. To make things simple, this book contains pages and pages of ready-to-use material—details about Western history, weapons, equipment, animals, historical gunslingers and their supporting cast, scenarios—everything you need to jump in and start a *Western Hero* adventure right away.

## WHAT IS WESTERN HERO?

*Western Hero* is the latest in the series of Campaign Books designed for use with the *HERO System Rulesbook*. Unlike some of the other *HERO System* supplements, characters in this game are not allowed to have Powers. *Western Hero* is meant to be a wholly heroic—not superheroic—game.

*Western Hero* contains everything you need to know to be able to roleplay in the American West between 1865–1901. Bank robberies, rustlers, bandits, wronged citizens, budding romances, hopeless causes and the kind of justice that comes from the barrel of a gun—all that’s in here, and more!

As well as supplying you with a load of fictional adventures and source material, *Western Hero* gives you a bit of history about the period of time in which the game is set and points you in the right direction if you want to go find out more. It tells you how to design a hero that fits into this environment, and about how he can try to defend himself against the perils he’ll face on an almost daily basis.

To make it easier for you to start right away, *Western Hero* also contains tons of ready-to-use material, including guidelines to cover most every combat situation you might encounter, adventure plots, campaign ideas and two scenarios: an introductory adventure and a full-blown mini-series. With this book and the *HERO System Rulesbook*, you can travel back in time and explore the American West just before the closing of the frontier. So, don’t be shy. Jump in head first and

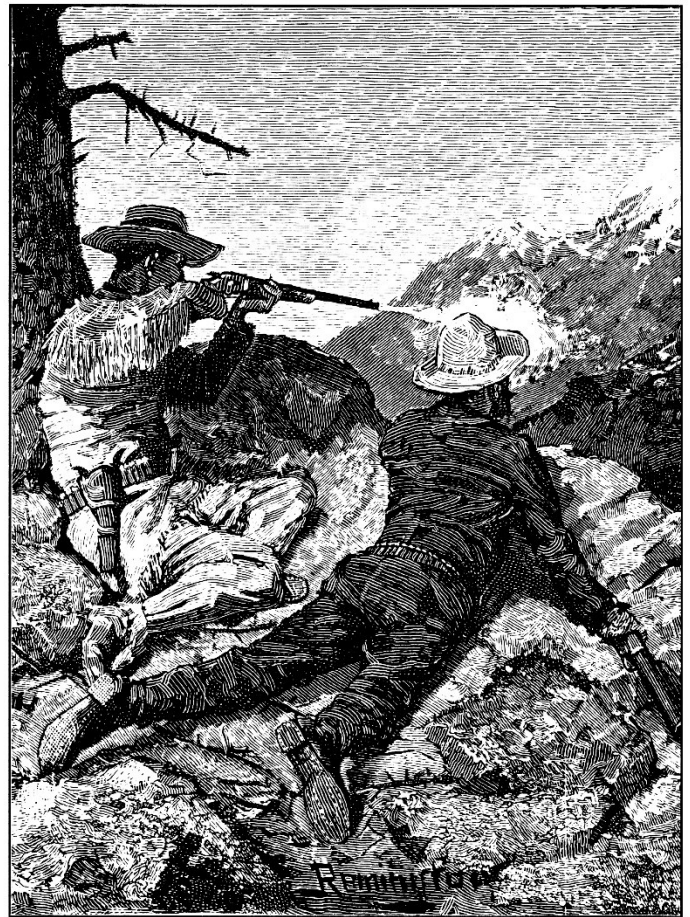
**BE A WESTERN HERO!**

## HOW TO USE THIS BOOK

*Western Hero* can be used to play Western adventures, or as source material for adventures and scenarios other than the archetypical Western. You could, for example, play an adventure set in the eastern United States during the Civil War. And since all parts of the *HERO System* are compatible, *Western Hero* can function as a sourcebook for other *HERO System* games. For instance, there have been several comic book cowboys that could be simulated with the rules in this book and placed into a *Champions* campaign.

### IF YOU’VE NEVER PLAYED A HERO SYSTEM GAME BEFORE

If you’ve never played any games using the *HERO System* (like *Champions* or *Fantasy Hero*), then this book is not the place to start reading. As explained above, *Western Hero* explains



how to use the *HERO System* rules in a Western setting, but for the most part it doesn’t actually contain those rules. If it did, this book would be over 350 pages long!

So before going any further, grab a copy of the *HERO System Rulesbook* and read it over. If you like, you can use the hardcover *Champions* book instead, as it contains the *HERO System* rules as well as the superhero roleplaying Campaign Book.

Once you have at least a basic understanding of the rules, come back to this book, which shows you how to use them in a Western setting. For further guidance, read the section below.

### IF YOU’VE PLAYED A HERO SYSTEM GAME BEFORE

If you’ve already played a *HERO System* game (like *Champions*, *Fantasy Hero* or *Ninja Hero*), then you already know how the *HERO System* works. *Western Hero* just shows you how to use those rules to play a Western game.

Read all the way through the *Campaign Book* section of this book. Players should concentrate on the *Character Creation* chapter, although there’s plenty of useful information in the *Combat* and *Gamemastering* chapters. GMs should read all three chapters carefully.

Players may or may not want to read the entire *Sourcebook*. If the GM intends to use the scenarios or sample campaign, then he should tell the players beforehand not to read those chapters, as this would spoil the games. GMs, obviously, should read the entire *Sourcebook*.



Whether you're familiar with the **HERO System** or not, *Western Hero* has been set up to make it easy for you to start up a Western campaign. This book has extensive guidelines for constructing your own characters and a number of different types of campaigns, but we've also included a ready-to-use campaign city, complete with characters and scenarios.

If you want to get started playing right away, just use the ready-made characters and scenarios. You can read and learn how to design your own material later.

## WHAT'S INSIDE

Here's a brief summary of what's inside *Western Hero* and how it's organized.

### THE CAMPAIGN BOOK

This section explains how to use the **HERO System** for Western roleplaying. The first chapter, *Character Creation*, explains how to build and play Western characters. The second chapter, *Combat*, tells the GM how he can simulate the blazing gunfights and bareknuckled brawls of Western combat. The *Gamemastering* chapter describes how a GM can create and run interesting Western scenarios and a full campaign.

### THE SOURCEBOOK

This section contains a tremendous amount of ready-to-use material intended to help a *Western Hero* Game Master run his campaign. The *History* chapter gives you a description of Western life. The *Bestiary* chapter has short write-ups for 10 creatures that you could encounter in a Western campaign. The *Characters* chapter has complete write-up of over 40 historical Western characters and 7 typical characters. These characters can either be used by the players as PCs or by the GM as NPCs.

Next comes the GM's Section. The *Deadwood* chapter contains an introductory scenario complete with a full campaign setting—the town of Deadwood, South Dakota—and a full-length adventure which can be run as a self-contained game or as the basis of a continuing campaign. The *Scenarios* chapter presents several ready-to-use scenarios. The *Miniatures* chapter includes a full set of rules for using miniatures with *Western Hero* to convert it into a fully three-dimensional roleplaying game. And, the *Bibliography* lists dozens of sources of inspiration for great *Western Hero* roleplaying scenarios.



# WESTERN™ HERO

*Clint and Logan Walker*

*looked around them. The barroom was filled with men, and all of them were after the price that was wrongfully placed on the two brother's heads. Clint drew his six-shooters with blinding speed, firing them wildly from the hip. Logan, seeing that their path of escape was too heavily blocked, grabbed the nearest scoundrel and tossed him through the large plate window. Bullets filled the air around them as they leapt through the open window, Clint's guns still blazing.*

*"Nice job, little brother," Clint shouted,*

*pointing with one gun while firing the last bullet of the other, "but we still need to worry about that!"*

*Logan looked in the direction indicated as the two ran for their horses. A wagon drove into town, loaded down with the weight of what the young gunslinger knew to be a Gatling gun. Maybe, just maybe, the two could outrun this group of bounty hunters, but how would they save the town from Lyle Clemens, the man who had framed them for murder and who was about to drive dozens of honest homesteaders off their land?*

*Western Hero™* is the Western source book for the *HERO System™*, providing enough information to run Western adventures in either the historical or the fictional Wild West. From lassoing a wild stallion to sliding a low-down cowpoke down the bar and through a window, it's all here. Use *Western Hero* as a supplement for your existing Hero game, or start your own Western campaign.

## *Western Hero* includes:

- Extensive guidelines and optional rules for Western-style maneuvers and combat.
- Suggestions and guidelines for creating Western-style characters, including many new package deals, advantage and disadvantage options, and more.
- A Western Sourcebook containing a timeline, a bestiary, descriptions and statistics for equipment and weapons, and pages of information on the Old West.
- A complete campaign setting based on the Western town of Deadwood.
- Two complete scenarios, numerous other adventure ideas, and plenty of advice for creating and running your own Western adventures and campaigns.
- Dozens of Western NPCs, including many historical figures such as *Wild Bill Hickock, Calamity Jane, Butch Cassidy* and *the Sundance Kid*.
- Layouts and descriptions for two Western towns, the OK Corral, a 1800s train, a bar, and other Western locations.



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To play *Western Hero*,  
the player must  
already own the  
*Hero System Rulesbook™*  
or *Champions®*

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