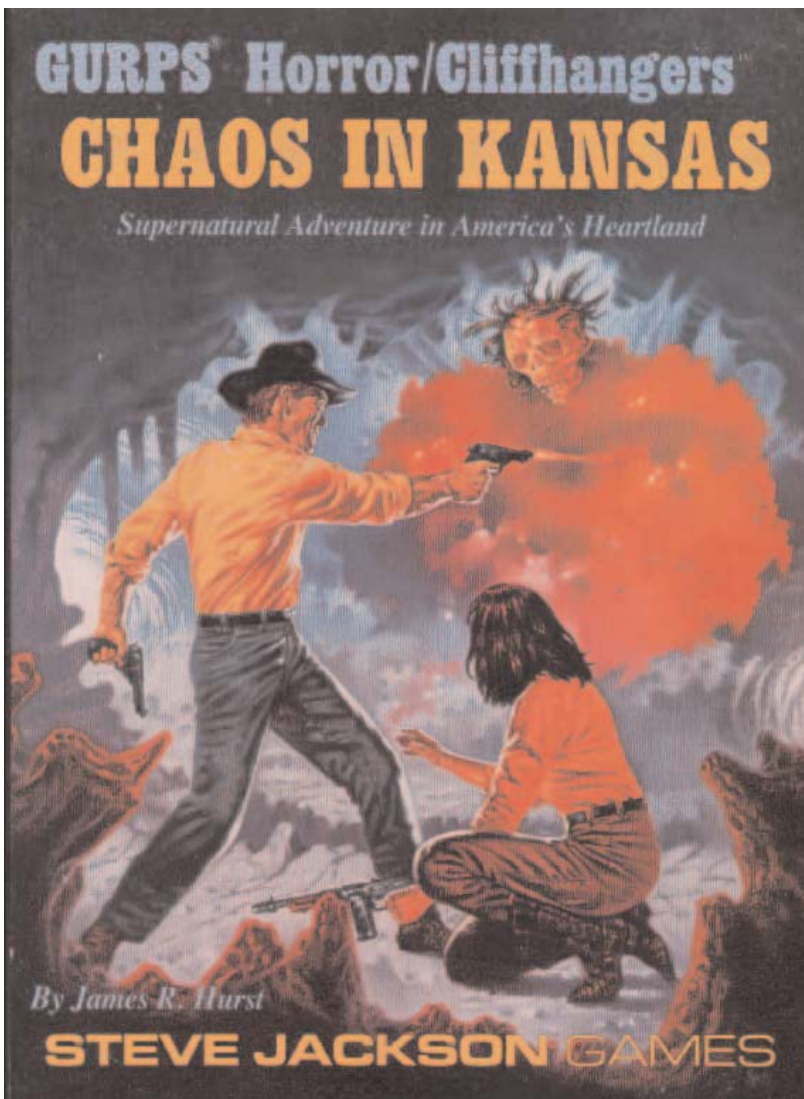


# GURPS®



## BEWARE OF THE DIRE DREAMER . . .

Tom Heskith, the son of a rich Kansas oilman, has disappeared! Was he kidnapped? Did he run away? Or perhaps something a bit more sinister is going on . . .

*Chaos in Kansas* is an adventure sourcebook for **GURPS Horror** and **GURPS Cliffhangers**. In *The Dire Dreamer* the characters will be swept up into a web of mystery and terror as they seek to find the missing person . . . without losing their lives or their sanity in the process.

*Chaos in Kansas* provides the gamemaster with everything needed for a **Cliffhangers** campaign, including a map of Liberty and surrounding environs, hints on how to leave the players hanging from adventure to adventure, and ideas for using Liberty in future adventures.

This PDF is a scanned copy of the last printed edition of *Chaos in Kansas*. No changes or updates from that edition were made, but we have appended all known errata to the end of the document.

**GURPS**, Warehouse 23, and the all-seeing pyramid are registered trademarks of Steve Jackson Games Incorporated. *Pyramid*, **GURPS Horror: Chaos in Kansas**, **e23**, and the names of all products published by Steve Jackson Games Incorporated are registered trademarks or trademarks of Steve Jackson Games Incorporated, or used under license. All rights reserved. **GURPS Horror: Chaos in Kansas** is copyright © 1989, 2006 by Steve Jackson Games Incorporated.

The scanning, uploading, and distribution of this material via the Internet or via any other means without the permission of the publisher is illegal, and punishable by law. Please purchase only authorized electronic editions, and do not participate in or encourage the electronic piracy of copyrighted materials. Your support of the authors' rights is appreciated.



**STEVE JACKSON GAMES**  
**e23.sjgames.com**



# GURPS<sup>®</sup> Horror/Cliffhangers<sup>™</sup> **CHAOS IN KANSAS**

*Supernatural Adventure in America's Heartland*



*By James R. Hurst*

**STEVE JACKSON GAMES**



# Beware of the Dire Dreamer...

Tom Heskith, the son of a rich Kansas oilman, has disappeared! Was he kidnapped? Did he run away? Or perhaps something a bit more *sinister* is going on . . .

*Chaos in Kansas* is an adventure source book for *GURPS Horror* and *GURPS Cliffhangers*. In *The Dire Dreamer* the characters will be swept up into a web of mystery and terror as they seek to find the missing person . . . without losing their lives or their sanity in the process.



Then it's on to *The Cement Works*, where the workers are ready to go on strike, the equipment is taking on a life of its own, and things are not always as they seem . . .

Liberty, Kansas, is the backdrop for the adventure. This sleepy little town (population: 9,832) is the typical Kansas city of the 1930s . . . or is it? Strange disappearances and mysterious noises are becoming disturbingly frequent. Over 45 locations in the town are detailed, including restaurants, speakeasies, hotels and many other locations. NPCs such as Sheriff Don Barr and the moonshining Compton boys are provided to flesh out both the adventure and an ongoing campaign. Minor NPCs are detailed in the locations in which they are encountered.

*Chaos in Kansas* provides the gamemaster with everything needed for a *Cliffhangers* campaign, including a map of Liberty and surrounding environs, hints on how to leave the players hanging from adventure to adventure, and ideas for using Liberty in future adventures.

Written by James R. Hurst  
Edited by Jim Bambra, Loyd Blankenship,  
Steve Jackson, and Monica Stephens  
Cover art by Miro Sinoveic  
Interior art by Butch Burcham



0 80742 06110 1

ISBN 1-55634-155-5

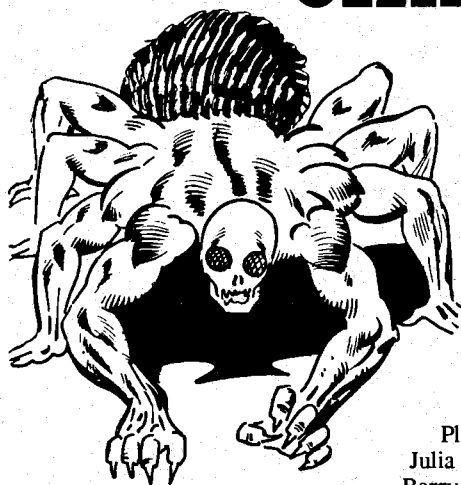
SJG00695 6110  
Made in the U.S.A.

**STEVE JACKSON GAMES**



# GURPS® Horror/Cliffhangers™

# CHAOS IN KANSAS



By James M. Hurst  
 Edited by Jim Bambra and Loyd Blankenship  
 with Steve Jackson and Monica Stephens  
 Cover by Miro Sinovic  
 Interior Art by Butch Burcham  
 GURPS System Design by Steve Jackson

Loyd Blankenship, Managing Editor  
 Layout and Typography by Steve Jackson  
 Production by Carl Manz, Valerie J. Camblin, Monica Stephens and Kerry Hagen  
 Proofreading by Ingrid Kunze

Playtesters: Todd Abbott, AKA Steve, Loyd Blankenship, Lane Boyd, Tim Carroll, Bryan Case, Julia Frizzell, Andy Hartsock, Rob Henderson, Harold Hoage, Ben Kloeppe, Jeff Koke, Michael Lee, Barry Link, Janet Naylor, Mike Naylor, Peter Riley, Alex von Thorn, Charlie Weidman, Tony Winkler.

<b>INTRODUCTION</b> .....	<b>2</b>
Kansas and Liberty .....	2
<i>About GURPS</i> .....	2
<i>About the Author</i> .....	2
Using the Adventures .....	3
The Dire Dreamer .....	3
The Cement Works .....	3
<i>Using the GM Aids</i> .....	3
Character Creation .....	3
<b>THE DIRE DREAMER</b> .....	<b>4</b>
A Desperate Appeal .....	4
<i>The Missing Heir: Tom Heskith</i> .....	4
Arrival in Liberty .....	5
The Heskith Mansion .....	6
<i>Jesse Heskith</i> .....	6
<i>Faye-Ellen Heskith</i> .....	6
Pacing the Adventure .....	6
Clues .....	7
Visiting the Sheriff .....	7
<i>The Liberty Daily Sentinel</i> .....	7
<i>Sheriff Don Barr</i> .....	7
<i>Bill Johnson</i> .....	7
<i>Jimmy Parsons</i> .....	7
Suspects .....	8
Jimmy Parsons .....	8
Lucinda Appley .....	8
<i>Lucinda Appley</i> .....	8
City College of Liberty .....	9
<i>Professor Kemper</i> .....	9
Extract from the Journal of Father Montclair .....	10
<i>The Goat Mask</i> .....	10
Southside .....	11
<i>Dream Probes</i> .....	11
Red Herrings .....	11
The Moonshiners .....	11
The Archaeological Site .....	11
Lucinda Reacts .....	12
The Old Cemetery .....	12
Other Attacks .....	12
<i>Members of the Coven</i> .....	12
<i>The Compton Boys</i> .....	12
The Cavern .....	12

The Altar Cave .....	13
<i>Guardian of the Altar</i> .....	13
Witch Hunt .....	13
The Place of Dreams .....	14
<i>The Dire Dreamer</i> .....	14
<i>Jean of Blois</i> .....	15
Consequences .....	15
Awarding Character Points .....	15
New Spells .....	15
<i>Always Leave Them Hanging</i> .....	16
<b>THE CEMENT WORKS</b> .....	<b>17</b>
Beginning the Adventure .....	17
<i>The Industrial Workers of the World</i> .....	17
Meeting the Bosses .....	18
<i>John Selby</i> .....	18
<i>Fred Halsey</i> .....	18
Arriving at the Site .....	18
Big Mike's Story .....	19
<i>"Big" Mike O'Roarke</i> .....	19
Questioning the Workers .....	19
<i>The Guards: Duke, Bud, Bill and Chuck</i> .....	19
Demon of Capitalism .....	20
<i>Joe Wesley — Ghost</i> .....	20
More Hauntings .....	20
<i>Jerry Goad</i> .....	21
<i>Songs and Quotes from the Wobblies</i> .....	22
<i>Solidarity Forever</i> .....	22
<i>The Preacher and the Slave</i> .....	22
Ending the Spirit Strike .....	23
Consequences .....	24
Awarding Character Points .....	24
<i>The Next Cliffhanger</i> .....	24
<b>WELCOME TO KANSAS</b> .....	<b>25</b>
Geography .....	25
History .....	25
Southeastern Kansas .....	25
Liberty .....	25
Northern Liberty .....	26
Southside .....	28
Bibliography .....	31
<b>Map of Liberty</b> .....	<b>32</b>

GURPS, Illuminati, Roleplayer and the all-seeing pyramid are registered trademarks and Cliffhangers is a trademark of Steve Jackson Games Incorporated. All names of other products published by Steve Jackson Games are registered trademarks or trademarks of Steve Jackson Games Incorporated, or used under license. Chaos in Kansas is copyright © 1989 by Steve Jackson Games Incorporated. All rights reserved. Printed in the U.S.A.

ISBN 1-155634-155-5

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

# STEVE JACKSON GAMES

# INTRODUCTION

This book contains two adventures set in the 1920s midwestern boomtown of Liberty, Kansas — a town where the Ozark Mountains meet the Great Plains, and where the sedate, self-confident, modern world meets the terror of the unknown.

## About GURPS

Steve Jackson Games is committed to full support of the *GURPS* system. Our address is SJ Games, Box 18957, Austin, TX 78760. Please include a self-addressed, stamped envelope (SASE) any time you write us! Resources now available include:

**Roleplayer.** This bimonthly newsletter includes new rules, variants, new races, beasts, information on upcoming releases, scenario ideas and more. Ask your game retailer, or write for subscription information.

**New supplements and adventures.** We're always working on new material, and we'll be happy to let you know what's available. A current catalog is available for an SASE.

**Errata.** Up-to-date errata sheets for all *GURPS* releases, including this book, are always available from SJ Games; be sure to include an SASE with your request.

**Q&A.** We do our best to answer any game question accompanied by an SASE.

**Gamer input.** We value your comments. We will consider them, not only for new products, but also when we update this book on later printings!

**BBS.** For those of you who have home computers, SJ Games operates a BBS with discussion areas for several games, including *GURPS*. Much of our playtest feedback for new products comes from the BBS. It's up 24 hours a day at 512-447-4449, at 300, 1200 or 2400 baud. Give us a call!

## Page References

Rules and statistics in this book are specifically for the *GURPS Basic Set* (Third Edition). Any page reference that begins with a B refers to a page in the *Basic Set* — e.g., p. B102 means p. 102 of the *Basic Set*, Third Edition. A reference that begins with H refers to *GURPS Horror*; a reference that begins with an M indicates *GURPS Magic*.

## About the Author

James Hurst is a long-time gamer who makes his living as an actor in the Wichita area of Kansas. Introduced to wargames by his brothers, he discovered roleplaying games in 1977. *Chaos in Kansas* is his first published work; he plans on doing a second book set in Liberty for early 1990.

In *The Dire Dreamer*, the adventurers must solve a kidnapping and deal with the evil force that threatens the town of Liberty. There are opportunities for characters of all types — sometimes stealth and trickery will be most important, and sometimes muscles and speed will be required!

In *The Cement Works*, the investigators will be asked to solve a very mundane, ordinary problem . . . which mushrooms into a truly unique experience.

## Kansas and Liberty

*Chaos in Kansas* also includes background information on Kansas and the town of Liberty. GMs should read through this section before commencing play, as it contains information relevant to the adventure. It also includes a number of ideas that can be easily developed into interesting sub-plots. GMs should keep their map of Liberty and this adventure after the mystery has been solved. Who knows what unspeakable horrors may crawl into this fair town in the future — another adventure book is in the works already!

**PLAYERS SHOULD STOP READING HERE!!!**



# 1

# THE DIRE DREAMER

## A Desperate Appeal

The character most prominent in occultism or detection receives the following telegram:

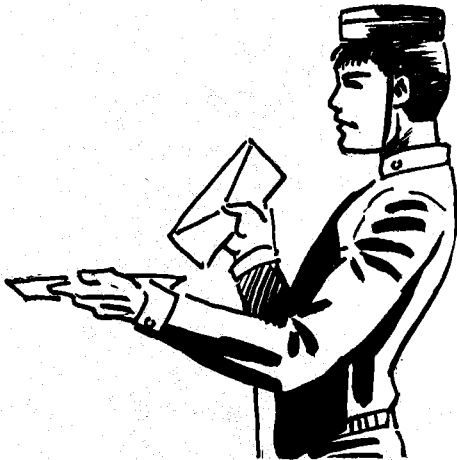
### *The Missing Heir: Tom Heskith*

Age 19, wavy black hair, brown eyes; 5'10", 155 lbs.  
ST 10, DX 12, IQ 10, HT 11.  
Basic Speed 5.75; Move 5.  
Dodge 5.  
Advantage: Wealthy.  
Disadvantage: Weak Will -2.  
Skills: Baseball-15; Carousing-11;  
Driving (Auto)-13; Guns; (Rifle)-12.  
Language: English-10.  
Weapons: Baseball bat (1d+3 crushing), .22 rifle (1d+2 crushing).

The missing heir is in serious trouble. Unless rescued fairly soon he will be sacrificed by his fiancée, Lucinda Appley. If the investigators save him, Tom will (after a few day's rest) be ready and able to assist them in any further adventuring needed to complete the investigation. His feelings toward his fiancée will have undergone a dramatic alteration.

Tom is a nice kid, a good athlete, with an easygoing nature. Hopefully, he will be more careful who he gives his heart to in future.

If rescued, Tom tells the adventurers about his kidnapping at the Old Cemetery, and that Lucinda visits Cedar Ridge on a regular schedule.



### EASTERN UNION

10:00 AM  
MAY 18, 1927

LIBERTY, KANSAS  
FRIDAY

YOU MUST SAVE MY SON STOP I KNOW YOU ARE GOOD  
PEOPLE AND CANNOT REFUSE THE CALL OF A SPIRIT  
IN PERIL STOP NO REWARD IS TOO GREAT IF YOU CAN  
HELP STOP PLEASE HURRY STOP

SIGNED

MRS JESSE HESKITH

Before the investigators can puzzle out the intent of this communication, another arrives:

### EASTERN UNION

10:04 AM  
MAY 18, 1927

LIBERTY, KANSAS  
FRIDAY

SPIRITS BUNKUM STOP JUST KEEP MY MRS HAPPY  
STOP RETAINER FOLLOWS STOP ADVISE ARRIVAL TIME  
STOP

SIGNED

JESSE HESKITH

This second telegram is accompanied by a bank draft for \$200.

Any character who succeeds in an IQ roll or makes a Research roll recalls a recent headline and can find a front-page article of two days previous, as shown in the sidebar. Thus, Heskith's story appears to be perfectly true.

Still, before departing for Liberty or accepting the commission, the party may want more information about Heskith. This information could be discovered in a newspaper morgue, a large public library, or anywhere else that the GM rules is reasonable.

# THE CEMENT WORKS

# 2

## Beginning the Adventure

If the campaign is being run in "cliffhanger" style, the *Dire Dreamer* adventure ended with the PCs in trouble . . . either being run off the road, or being shaken down by some very unfriendly policemen. Either way, it proves to be a case of mistaken identity. Liberty is having union troubles . . . and the PCs, being tough-looking strangers in town, were mistaken for union organizers! Ironically, the officers who roused them (or the plainclothes team who ran them off the road) were supposed to escort them to the Kean Hotel to meet the wealthy John Selby, who wanted to ask for their help. (A secretary will lose his job over this confusion!)

Even without a question of mistaken identity, anyone who participated in the *Dire Dreamer* affair can be drawn into this investigation by Jesse Heskith, on behalf of his friend, Fred Halsey. Detectives, government agents, or policemen may be summoned by the rich, influential John Selby. Arrangements are made for the investigators to meet John Selby and Fred Halsey in Selby's rooms at the Kean Hotel (location 18). After initial introductions have been made, the investigators are shown the following clipping from the *Liberty Daily Sentinel*:

### Another Work Stoppage at Selby Construction Site

Workers walked off the construction site of the new Selby Concrete Company factory northeast of Liberty, today at 10:30 a.m. The stoppage occurred after an accident with a steam shovel slightly injured three men.

Work had stopped yesterday afternoon following a brawl which broke out in one of the unfinished buildings. In both cases, after the initial disturbance, workers downed their tools and assembled at the front gates to demand a meeting with their employer, Mr. Fred Halsey, a local contractor.

Yesterday's disturbance was broken up by the foreman and company guards. However, today, the men walked out of the gates when their demand for a meeting was refused. When this reporter arrived on the scene, the force of nearly 100 men was still idling

before the gates. Although the mob had the appearance of a strike, none would discuss their grievances.

Spokesmen for Selby Concrete Co. and Halsey General Contracting deny rumors of unsafe conditions at the site. Mr. Selby is quoted as saying, "This situation is obviously the work of Bolshevik agitators." No further comment was available.

**MIRACLE RUMORS**  
**Dr. Johnson's**  
**Spring No-Aches**

Cures backaches, warts, thinning  
colds and influenzas

## *The Industrial Workers of the World*

The Industrial Workers of the World, or IWW, was founded in 1905 in Chicago. It was a union with syndicalist goals. The syndicalist idea was to organize all workers, all over the world into, as they said, "One Big Union." The syndicalist aim was to use strikes, culminating in a world-wide general strike, to bring the capitalist nations of the world to their knees. They would then place all means of production and all political power into the hands of the workers.

The IWW, or "Wobblies" (the origins of the nickname are obscure; it may refer to the constant shifts in policy of the IWW leadership), had a controversial but ultimately inconclusive history. They won many individual strikes, but could never achieve the sweeping successes they needed. They developed many of the strike procedures and propaganda techniques that have become part of the standard arsenal of modern labor unions. They had unprecedented success in organizing migrant workers, lumbermen, blacks and immigrants. Yet their membership never grew to match the strength of Samuel Gompers's American Federation of Labor (AFL).

Part of their problem was that the Wobblies were constantly torn by internal faction fights. Also, their very effectiveness at publicity made them a bigger target for anti-anarchist and anti-Bolshevik sentiment than other socialist organizations.

The killing blow to the IWW was probably World War I. General IWW policy had always opposed war as a tool of the capitalists. The anarchist faction of the Wobblies openly advocated sabotage against industry. These two factors led to mob and vigilante violence against the Wobblies. Eventually almost the entire IWW leadership was tried and imprisoned for treason.

Although briefly bolstered by this experience, it was then that the IWW began to disintegrate. Though they pointed to their martyrs with pride, and appealed to many people's imaginations, their influence waned and disappeared.

At the time of this adventure, however, they are still active . . . and more than a little fanatical.

# WELCOME TO KANSAS

# 3

This chapter will give background information on the state of Kansas, and details on the fictional town of Liberty, in the Roaring Twenties.

## Geography

Kansas is made up of rolling plains and steep hills, formed by the prehistoric ocean which once covered the area. The state's eastern portion, where the two adventures are set, has the state's highest annual rainfall; thus there are many stream and river floodplains, and woodlands. There are rocky ridges and small canyons of weathered rock. The terrain is more like the Ozarks in nearby Missouri than the rolling plains of western Kansas.

The population centers of 20th-century Kansas are in the eastern half. The state's largest city, however, is Wichita in south-central Kansas. Other prominent towns include Topeka, the capitol; the college towns of Lawrence (University of Kansas) and Manhattan (Kansas State University); and Kansas City, Kansas, which sits in the shadow of its big brother, Kansas City, Missouri.

## History

The native Indians of Kansas were displaced in 1830 when several eastern tribes were ceded the territory by the U.S. government. These tribes were themselves supplanted by the western expansion of white settlement in the 1870s.

In the 1850s, Kansas became the stage for open hostility between pro- and anti-slavery factions. The often-bloody debate was finally settled when Kansas entered the Union as a "free state" on January 29, 1861 — just in time for the Civil War.

After the war, Kansas was active in the social movements of Populism, Progressivism, Imperialism and Prohibition. However, after World War I, Kansas turned increasingly to extreme conservatism and isolationism. The reformers who had fought for Prohibition turned their attention to matters of private morality. The state's political and cultural atmosphere became increasingly repressive and stagnant throughout this period, reaching a nadir in the 1930s. Combined with the declining economic fortunes of the state, this eliminated Kansas as an important contributor to national history for several years. The state would not begin to recover from the effects of this isolation until the end of World War II.

In 1927, most of Kansas remains an agricultural state, dotted with small farming communities. New tensions are caused by the widening social gap between the rural areas and the cities.

## Southeastern Kansas

In the 1890s, petroleum and natural gas were discovered in the fields of southeastern Kansas and northeastern Oklahoma. The resulting financial boom brought a level of urbanization not previously found in the state, except in the Wichita and Kansas City areas. This boom economy helped cushion the area against the social malaise that paralyzed the rest of the state. The Great Depression broke the spell of this protection but, while it lasted,

the boom encouraged prosperity and a positive attitude in its citizens.

The people in the southeast are a microcosm of Kansas. Though generally easy-going, they tend to distrust strangers, particularly those expressing different points of view. Such people may eventually be accepted into the community, but they will always be considered "outsiders."

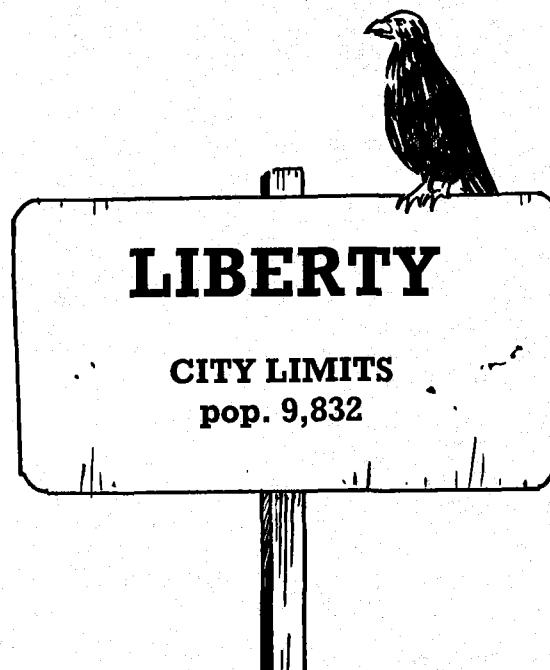
Even though the towns are not very large, there is a good deal of difference in attitude between urban and rural folk. It should also be kept in mind that while the people in the southeast may be provincial, they are not naive.

## Liberty

Liberty is in southeastern Kansas. It was founded in 1851 as a trading post. As settlers arrived in the area, Liberty expanded; in 1861, when the railroad reached it, Liberty incorporated as a town. Liberty became the county seat in 1870, and the population swelled to about 8,000. By the 1920s it had reached approximately 10,000, a level it has maintained to the present day.

Liberty is the setting for the adventures, but it is also a living and breathing town in its own right. To this end, places where the adventurers will stop for lunch, gas or entertainment are included along with locations important to the adventures. GMs can use this information to bring the town alive for the players by letting them interact with a wide range of NPCs.

Liberty is divided into two halves. The middle classes live in the respectable northern part. In the Southside, crime and poverty are exacerbated by the centuries-long sway of the Dire Dreamer. Even after the Dreamer has been destroyed, its influence will continue to linger . . . its vileness has touched many permanently.



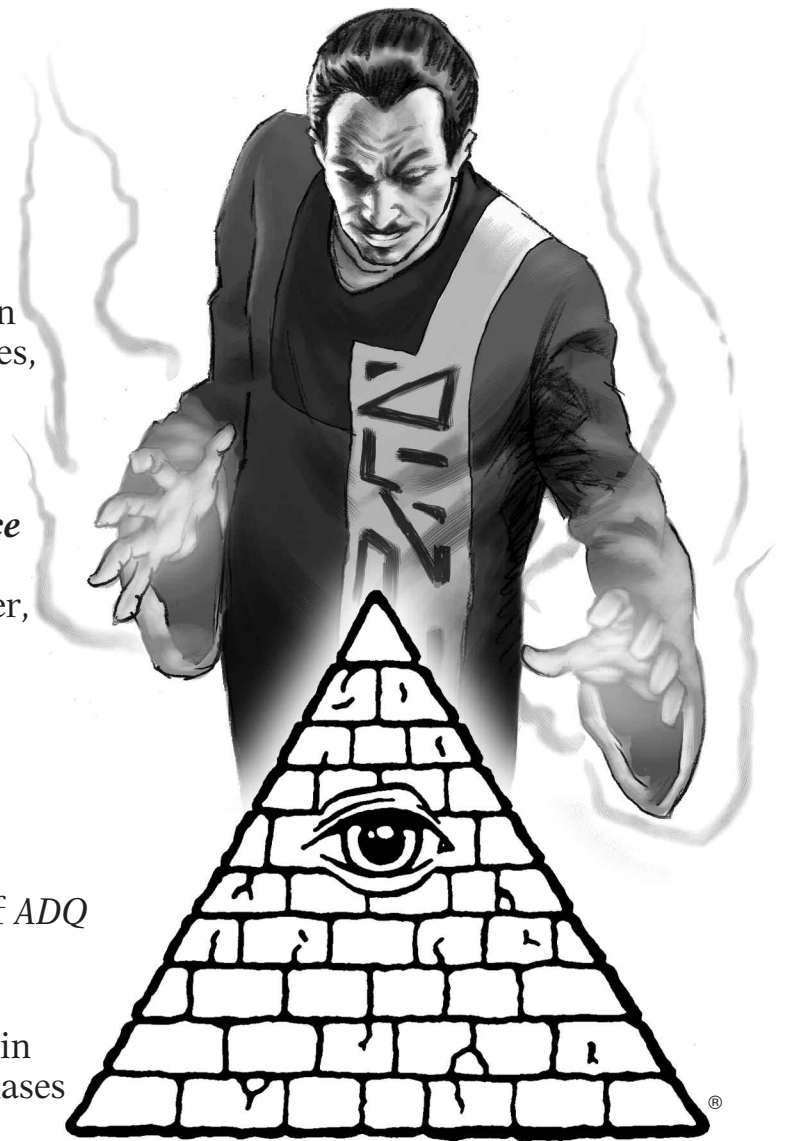


# STUCK FOR AN ADVENTURE? NO PROBLEM.

---

**Warehouse 23** sells high-quality  
game adventures and supplements  
in print and PDF formats.

- Free downloadable adventures for *GURPS*, *In Nomine*, and *Traveller*!
- Fun gaming accessories – shot glasses, shirts, specialty six-siders, and more!
- PDFs from Atlas Games, Amarillo Design Bureau, Pelgrane Press, Goodman Games, and many others – plus gems from the up-and-comers.
- Original material for *Transhuman Space* and new *GURPS* supplements from Kenneth Hite, Phil Masters, David Pulver, Sean Punch, and William Stoddard!
- Fully searchable files of *GURPS Fourth Edition* supplements.
- Digital editions of out-of-print classics, from *Orcslayer* and the complete run of *ADQ* to *GURPS China* and *GURPS Ice Age*.
- Buy board games and roleplaying PDFs in the same order! Download digital purchases again whenever you need to.



**STEVE JACKSON GAMES**  
**warehouse23.com**