

PYRAMID

Issue 3/74 December '14

WILD WEST



**ASHIWI
COUNTRY**
by Matt Riggsby

A WESTWARD-SHAMBLING HORDE
by Sean Punch *LASTON*

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

OUTLAWS AND ARROWS
by Christopher R. Rice

**FAMOUS WILD WEST
GUNFIGHTS**
by Hans-Christian Vortisch

STEVE JACKSON GAMES

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IN THIS ISSUE

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

ARTICLE COLORS

Each article is color-coded to help you find your favorite sections.

Pale Blue: In This Issue

Brown: In Every Issue (humor, editorial, etc.)

Green: Columnist

Dark Blue: **GURPS** Features

Purple: Systemless Features

COVER ART

Loston Wallace

INTERIOR ART

Matt Riggsby

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

– Charles Goodnight

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FROM THE EDITOR

GO WEST, YOUNG GAMER

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

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

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

It's also a surprisingly *portable* genre. The conventional wisdom is that a setting can't be popular unless you add magic, but adding Western elements to other genres is almost as popular: steampunk Western, horror Western, space Western, and so on. (This is especially true if you break down

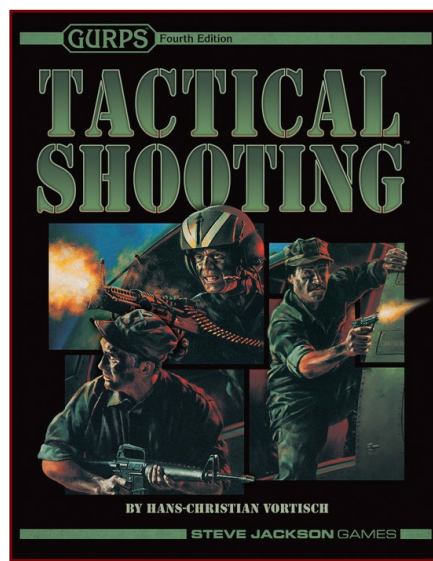
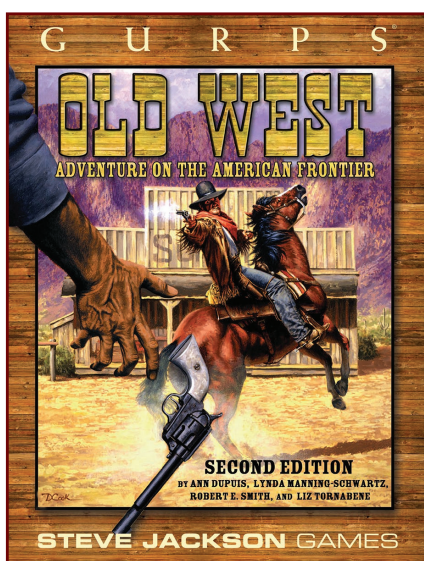
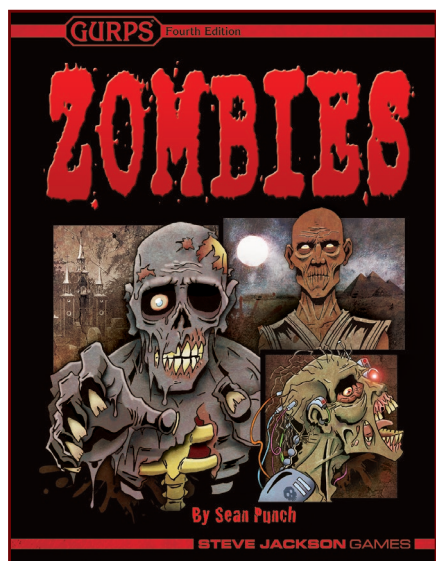
the Western into baser components – see pp. 37-38 for more insight there).

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

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

WRITE HERE, WRITE NOW

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



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CULTURE AND DAILY LIFE

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

NAMES AND LANGUAGE

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

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

Ladies, Gentlemen, Etc.

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

FAMILY

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

The tribe is also matrilineal. Once married, and if they don’t build a new home right away, men move in with their wife’s

family. Extended families are the rule as long as there’s room: an old married couple, their unmarried sons, their married daughters and their husbands, and even grandchildren may all live in the same large room. Homes are regarded as women’s property. Should a couple divorce (not an uncommon occurrence), the man leaves the home in his ex-wife’s possession as a matter of course. Fields are a man’s property, but harvested crops are typically turned over to his wife for management.

INDUSTRIES

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

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

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

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

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

CUISINE

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

PREACHER

250 points

The Lord is my Shepherd; I shall not want.

– Psalms 23:1

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

Attributes: ST 10 [0]; DX 12 [40]; IQ 14 [80]; HT 12 [20].

Secondary Characteristics: Damage 1d-2/1d; BL 20 lbs.; HP 10 [0]; Will 16 [10]; Per 16 [10]; FP 12 [0]; Basic Speed 6.00 [0]; Basic Move 6 [0].

Advantages: Charisma 2 [10] and Clerical Investment [5].

• *One of Luck* [15] or *Serendipity* 1 [15]. • *One of Hellfire-and-Brimstone Preacher* 4 (p. 17) [20], *Good Shepherd* 4 (p. 17) [20], or *Medicine Man* 4 (p. 17) [20], or spend 20 points in appropriate advantages for faith. • 30 points chosen from among lens advantages (**Action 1**, pp. 4-5), ST +1 or +2 [10 or 20], DX +1 [20], IQ +1 [20], HT +1 or +2 [10 or 20], Will +1 to +4 [5/level], Alcohol Tolerance [1], Charisma 3-6 [5/level], Contact Group (Congregation, Church elders, etc.; Skill-12, 15, or 18; 9 or less; Somewhat Reliable) [5, 10, or 15], Fearlessness 1-7 [2/level] or Unfazeable [15], Higher Purpose [5], Intuition [15], Resistant to Influence Skills (+3 or +8) [5 or 7] or Indomitable [15], Language Talent [10], Languages (any) [2-6/language], No Hangover [1], Religious Rank [5/level], Sensitive [5] or Empathy [15], Serendipity 2-3 [15/level], Voice [10], or replace Luck [15] with Extraordinary Luck [30] for 15 points.

Disadvantages: *One of Disciplines of Faith* (Ritualism) [-5], *Odious Personal Habit* (Fire-and-brimstone preaching)

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

Primary Skills: *One of the following packages:*

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

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

Background Skills: Choose a 20-point lens (pp. 18-19 and **Action 1**, pp. 4-5). • *One of Riding* (Horse) (A) DX [2]-12 or *Teamster* (Horse) (A) IQ [2]-14.

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

† Includes +4 from Hellfire-and-Brimstone Preacher Talent.

‡ Includes +2 from Charisma.

§ Includes +4 from Good Shepherd Talent.

¶ Includes +4 from Medicine Man Talent.

Customization Notes

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

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

FEVER!

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

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

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

Book Learnin': This is simply *Infection* (*Zombies*, p. 21) in a setting where sickness is widespread and misunderstood. The zombies should be Infectious (*Zombies*, p. 67). They might also carry ordinary disease; see *Pestilent* (*Zombies*, p. 56). Otherwise, pick from among plague ghouls (*Zombies*, pp. 90-91), infected (*Zombies*, pp. 97-98), crazies (*Zombies*, pp. 101-102), etc., or invent a variant. Be sure to include “fever” among the early symptoms, so that the local

doc won't have cause to suspect that anything is amiss. Since the underlying mechanism is a pathogen, the zombies shouldn't be particularly susceptible to mystical powers, if such are available to PCs.

HARD WINTER

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

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

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

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

MESMERIZED AND GALVANIZED

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

ABOUT *GURPS*

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Errata. Everyone makes mistakes, including us – but we do our best to fix our errors. Up-to-date errata pages for all *GURPS* releases, including this book, are available on our website – see above.

Rules and statistics in this book are specifically for the *GURPS Basic Set, Fourth Edition*. Page references that begin with B refer to that book, not this one.

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