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TM



# Deadlands D20

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*Deadlands* created by Shane Lacy Hensley.

**Dedicated to:** The new Ronan. My little cowboy.

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# THE TOMBSTONE EPITAPH

1877 Edition

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## A WORD FROM THE EDITOR

Welcome, friends, to the *Tombstone Epitaph's* latest attempt to educate the masses and illuminate the truth in the *Newcomer's Guide to the Weird West*. My name is Lacy O'Malley, your erstwhile investigator and humble reporter. You might remember me from such guidebooks as our original *Guide to the Weird West*, the 1877 Update, the *Guide to the City o' Gloom*, the *Guide to the Mighty Mississippi*, or the Back East North and South guidebooks. These are available in finer mercantiles everywhere, or for rush order from the fine folks at Smith & Robards.

Many scoff at the bizarre tales we expound here in the pages of the *Epitaph*—stories more “distinguished” papers refuse to print. But experienced travelers know our reports are amazingly accurate, paranormally insightful, and uniquely designed to save the lives of those who venture into the often dangerous locales of the frontier.

But many are only learning the dark truths about our fair continent and the mysterious things that crawl upon it. They have yet to feel sinister eyes upon them as they move through the back alleys

of Dodge City. They have not witnessed the awesome power, or the frightening intelligence of the rattlers. Nor have they heard the rustling grass of the High Plains as some feral creature stalks its prey.



Outside our esteemed offices in Tombstone, Arizona.

It is to these newcomers—greenhorns, the frontiersmen call them—that we dedicate this issue. In the pages of this guide we have taken a step back from our wild proclamations and dire warnings to ease a new generation into the truth man was not meant to know.

And for those foreign travelers who know little of our shores, we have briefly recounted the amazing history of our land—including the Great Quake of '68, the discovery of ghost rock, the state of our war-torn homeland, and the rise of the Indian nations.

It is our hope to provide you with the basic information you must know to survive here in the West, dear newcomer. Good luck in your travels, and

Godspeed. The Good Lord knows our cemeteries are full of those of you who have come before. Perhaps some tidbit here will save you from this dire fate.

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## WELCOME TO THE WEIRD WEST!

We should begin our tale with the Great Quake of '68, for the quake—and what was revealed when it split the entire west coast of America apart—has shaped our country, and indeed our world, more than any other single event.

California had long been a land of dreams. Gold was discovered there in '49 and the tales of those who had become millionaires overnight were the stuff of legend.

The migration of hundreds of thousands of settlers looking to partake in this miracle was what formed the early history of the "Old West." The dangers of the frontier, the Indians, outlaws, burning deserts, and freezing mountains, created the legendary gunfighters, adventurers, and heroes that so many read about in the dime novels and penny dreadfuls. Men like Wyatt Earp, Wild Bill Hickock, and Bill Pickett were forged in this harsh land, drawn westward by the lure of gold or the notion they would bring law and order to this wild, reckless land.

### The Great Quake of '68

Now imagine the power of a mineral twice as valuable and a thousand times more useful than gold. That's what happened in 1868 when California fell into the sea.

An earthquake the likes of which the world has never seen before or since shattered the west coast from Mexicali to Oregon. In its wake was left the "Maze," a labyrinth of jagged mesas towering over the flooded sea-channels below. Magnificent new beasts such as the Maze dragon were discovered in those troubled waters, but more amazing was the discovery of what some at first thought was simple coal. In fact, the sundered landscape had cracked open to reveal a new mineral heretofore undiscovered.

This new fundament burns a hundred times hotter and longer than coal, and when burned, gives off a ghostly-white vapor and howls like the Devil Himself. The first survivors of the quake who discovered it called it "ghost rock."

The name stuck.

### The Power of Ghost Rock

While you have no doubt seen inventions powered by steam and ghost rock wherever you're from, you must understand the impact this amazing mineral has had on California and the Maze.

Immediately after its discovery, a great number of hopeful inventors headed to the Maze. In months, they had perfected devices powered by steam and fueled by ghost rock. Reports of horseless carriages, ghost rock powered ships, and even weapons capable of spewing a torrent of bullets or spewing great gouts of flame became common.

### The Battle of Washington

Confederate President Jefferson Davis was the first to realize ghost rock's potential value to his war effort. Under his supervision, a number of incredible devices were developed in a secret base near Roswell, New Mexico (the base has since been destroyed by an unfortunate accident). These secret weapons were shipped Back East and used in the South's biggest offensive ever.

In February of 1871, General Lee and his Army of Northern Virginia attacked the Union lines around Washington D.C. The attack, backed by weird science, was devastatingly effective, so effective, in fact, that Lee's forces actually seized the Union's capital!

### The Great Rail Wars

The Yankees eventually took their city back as the Rebels' devices began to malfunction or run out of ghost rock, but the message was clear—ghost rock-powered weapons and devices were the way of the future.

Though ghost rock had since been found all over the country, the greatest concentrations were still in the Maze, and no single rail line yet connected them to the battlefields of the East. Once back

