

GURPS® Horror

THE OLD STONE FORT

Battle Against Cherokee Spirits in '20s Tennessee



STEVE JACKSON GAMES

The Riddle of the Night Goers

The Old Stone Fort near Manchester, Tennessee, has been the setting for legends of the Ancient Ones since before the white man came. The Indians told tales of the *Sungnawye Eddahee* — the Night Goers — and of other spirits.

Intrigued by these legends, Professor Geoffrey Moorehead decided to investigate . . . and vanished from the face of the earth.

Now it falls to you to solve the mystery of Moorehead's disappearance. Your search will take you to Manchester and the Old Stone Fort, through the forests and caves of the surrounding areas. It will pit you against the spirits of Cherokee mythology. Will you discover Moorehead's fate . . . or share it?

The Old Stone Fort is a *GURPS Horror* adventure for 3-6 players. Also in this book:

- new skills and spells for your *GURPS Horror* campaigns
- maps and background to help you set up a campaign in '20s Tennessee
- guidelines for adapting the adventure for a modern-day campaign
- a complete town description, suitable for use in any adventure.

The Old Stone Fort requires both the *GURPS Basic Set* and *GURPS Horror*.

Explore the Old Stone Fort — but don't do it alone!

Written by Don Rapp
Edited by Mike Moe
Cover art by Jean Martin
Illustrated by David Kimmel
and Don Rapp



STEVE JACKSON GAMES



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GURPS® Horror

THE OLD STONE FORT

A 1920s Adventure for the Generic Universal Roleplaying System

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Respectfully dedicated to Pig Eyes, Patti and Ward Weems. — Don Rapp

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STEVE JACKSON GAMES

INTRODUCTION

Players' Introduction

The adventure begins on a brisk day in late August of 1925, when one of the PCs (a colleague of Professor Moorehead and preferably an academic, student, explorer or occultist) receives a letter in the mail. The return address on the envelope is George Peabody College, Nashville, Tennessee. There is nothing else to distinguish it as being of any particular importance.

Opening the envelope, its recipient finds a letter printed on the letterhead of the Tennessee Academy of Science. The letter reads as follows:

"I realize that we met only briefly during the last symposium, but I am at a loss. The disappearance of your old mentor, Professor Moorehead, has troubled me deeply. If there is any way in which I might presume upon that brief meeting and upon your respect for Professor Moorehead, I implore you to come to Nashville at once! Time is of the essence, and I fear the worst!

"Speaking for Peabody College and the Academy as well, I can offer you some financial assistance, plus the resources of both institutions, in aid of your investigation. Of course, we will have to keep the exact nature of your (shall I say) "mission" a secret. Perhaps if you were to gather a party and apply in person to complete Moorehead's archaeological survey of the area in and around the Old Stone Fort?

"Please reply soonest."

The letter is signed: "Dr. Drew McGill; Curator, Indian Legends Department; Tennessee Academy of Science."

The PC recalls the many occasions when he had the privilege of working with Moorehead in his investigations of early American antiquities and legends. He also vaguely remembers having met McGill the previous year at the annual symposium chaired by Moorehead, where McGill presented a paper on the legends of the Indians of Tennessee.

If you intend to be a player in this adventure, read no further. The rest of this book is for the GM's eyes only.

GM's Introduction

The Old Stone Fort, near the rural town of Manchester, Tennessee, has been the setting for legends of the Ancient Ones since before the white man came. The Indians who once inhabited the area told tales that were passed down from their fathers, and from their fathers' fathers — tales of witches who gathered at the center of the fort's enclosure, and of the ceremonies performed there.

During the early years of the nineteenth century, the males of the Struver clan fell under the influence of the Ancient Ones. In 1817, Ephraim Struver obtained the only known copy of Thruston's *On the Uses of the Old Stone Fort near Manchester in Certain Unwholesome Ceremonies by the Red Indians*. In this book, he learned that it was possible to open gateways for the Ancient Ones to cross over from the Other Side. The creation of a permanent gateway would require the completion of five ceremonies over four generations. The Ancient Ones, in gratitude for being allowed access to This Side, would grant their summoners immortality, power and wealth. Staggered by these revelations and filled with religious fanaticism, Struver embarked on a plan which would eventually allow him and his descendants to rule as Kings of the Witches.

About the Adventure

The Old Stone Fort is a **GURPS Horror** adventure for three to six 100-point characters. It is suitable for either *full magic* or *secret magic* campaigns. While the adventure is written for 1925, it can be readily adapted for present-day campaigns (see sidebars, pp. 6, 8 and 10). With the exception of prices and an institution or two, it can be run almost "as is," regardless of the date.

The adventure is intended to be played over several sessions. The background information in this book can easily kick off a continuing campaign in the Tennessee area. The dwellers on the Other Side are constantly seeking access to This Side . . .

With some minor changes, the town of Manchester can be moved to any other locale, and thus can serve as a setting for almost any adventure. Such small towns have been the settings for many continuing series of horror stories and novels. Popular examples include: Arkham, in the Cthulhu mythos stories of H. P. Lovecraft; Harrisonburg, in the Jules de Grandin stories of Seabury Quinn; Oxrun Station, in the stories of Charles L. Grant; and Greystone Bay, in the horror anthologies edited by Grant.

In the center of the book is a 4-page pull-out section with maps and clues. The GM may cut these out and give them to his players at appropriate points in the adventure. He may wish to cut up the stone fragments into their individual pieces, requiring the players to assemble them.

The GM should read this book thoroughly before starting play.

Abbreviations

The following abbreviations are used to represent **GURPS** worldbooks:

- A = Autoduel
- B = Basic Set
- BY = Bestiary
- F = Fantasy
- H = Horror
- HC = Horseclans
- HX = Humanx

Thus, p. H23 refers to **GURPS Horror**, p. 23.

MYTHS AND MAGIC

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Mythology

The American Indians are a very reverent people. They have an intimate relationship with nature, feeling a sense of kinship with the natural world. Religion pervades all aspects of their life, and is a function of all activity — whether it's hunting, survival, technology, tribal organization, warfare or art.

For the Indian, the natural and supernatural are inseparable. Innate souls and human properties are attributed to plants, animals, inanimate objects and natural phenomena. In addition, the universe is suffused with preternatural forces and powerful spirits.

Mythology, then, is a way of understanding reality and the Indian's place in the world. It plays an important role in defining those areas which are permissible, as opposed to those which are *gaktv'ta* — under ceremonial tabu. The presence of witches and demons marks those areas which may not be entered, those borders which may not be crossed with impunity. Furthermore, mythology defines the Indian's relationship with the Grandfather Spirit and the Grandmother Earth, with the animals and all other living creatures, as well as with both life and death.

According to many Indian systems of belief, there is a second world in addition to our own. This world is the world of the Other Side, the Beyond World, the world of the spirits. The Other Side is a complete world in and of itself, inhabited not only by spirits, but also by humans and animals. There is no clear demarcation between the world of the Other Side and our world, the world of This Side. It is possible to travel freely back and forth between the two worlds, using the appropriate spells and gateways; the Old Stone Fort is one such gateway.

Indian Witches and Evil Beings

During the course of this adventure, the party will encounter several Cherokee witches and evil spirits from The Other Side. In order of increasing threat, these are: The Night Goers, human witches who "steal" life from their victims; The Raven Mocker, a witch who is no longer human, and who appears as an old man bathed in fire; The Water Cannibals, a race of spirit beings who live in deep pools and waterfalls; The Moon-Eyed People, a nation of Indian witches who may be destroyed by fire or by direct sunlight; and the Windigo, one of the most widely feared spirits in Indian mythology.

Svna'yi Eda'hi — The Night Goers

Description: The Night Goers are human witches who normally live on the Other Side, although they are capable of crossing over to This Side. While they may assume the shapes of animals, they usually appear in human form, as ancient and withered Indian men.

"This Cherokee witch is supposed to go about chiefly under the cover of darkness and hence is called Svna'yi Eda'hi, 'the night goer.' This is the term in common use, but there are a number of ways to designate a witch, one of which may be rendered as 'the imprecator,' i.e., the sayer of evil things or curses. When it is known that a man is dangerously sick the witches gather about his house after nightfall to worry him and even force their way to his bedside unless



WHERE IS MOOREHEAD?

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Welcome to Nashville, Y'all!

Upon arriving in Nashville, the investigators must find a place to stay. While there are many houses catering to transients, the party will be refused at each — “I don't like to rent to large groups of people,” or “Sorry, I only rent my rooms to singles. And, no, I won't consider each of you a different renter.” The group will be referred to the downtown hotels — “That's where most out-of-town folks stay, anyway.”

There are several hotels in Nashville, but only two have vacancies at the time of the adventurers' arrival. These are the Hermitage House and the Maxwell House — where Teddy Roosevelt once exclaimed that the coffee was “good to the last drop!” Both are luxury hotels. Meals are not normally included in the cost of rooms, although the Maxwell House does have a plan whereby guests may rent rooms with dinner included — dress is required — at the exorbitant rate of \$70.00 per week. If the adventure is being run in the present day, there are any number of hotels and motels available in all price ranges.

Once the party has decided on a place to stay, they might wish to avail themselves of some real Southern cooking — and save on what the hotel charges for meals. Inquiring at the desk, they will find that two restaurants have found favor with visitors: the Golden Chariot “away out on Nolensville Road,” and the Ninth Avenue Pie Wagon which “ain't a wagon, it don't serve pies and is on Twelfth Avenue South!” Both places are reasonably priced and specialize in “down-home cooking.” The group may also decide to visit the well-known local speakeasy, the Southern Turf (see sidebar, p. 26)

George Peabody College

Once having settled in, the group should pay a visit to Dr. McGill. If they think to, they can call his office and set up an appointment in advance. Otherwise, they must take their chances on his being in when they call on him.

George Peabody College is a decent taxi ride from downtown Nashville — approximately fifteen minutes if the driver is honest, or up to 45 minutes if he is dishonest and sees the PCs as easy marks. Make a reaction roll, with a reaction of Good or better getting an honest cabbie. An unfavorable reaction will result in a lengthy — and expensive — cab ride; but the passengers will get to see a lot of Nashville! If the cabbie is honest, the cab ride will cost 50¢ for one passenger, plus 10¢ per additional passenger. A ride with a dishonest cabbie will cost three times this amount. Multiply these costs by ten for a modern day adventure .

Arriving at the College, the characters must find the Administration Building. Here they encounter the deputy registrar's assistant, Elaine Avergnon (see sidebar). Miss Avergnon, in her sixties, is haughty and distant, and will be reluctant to part with any information about the college or its staff. If the inquirers have an appointment, or can show Dr. McGill's letter, she will inform them that he is teaching an English class across campus but will shortly return to his offices on the third floor. Otherwise, a Contest of Diplomacy vs. IQ is necessary to get her to divulge this information. Should the characters be unsuccessful in getting her to tell them where McGill's office is, one of them might pick up a college catalog and discover the location therein, or a wandering student could lead them to the office . . . eventually.

A Timeframe of Events

Moorehead's disappearance was reported about a week to ten days before the beginning of the adventure; he was replaced by a Water Cannibal simulacrum ten days before that. The culmination of the adventure will come on September 22, the Autumnal equinox. On that night, Struver, if not prevented, will conduct the final ceremony to release the Indian witches.

Within these limits, the timeframe of the adventure has been left deliberately vague. There are two reasons for this: first, there are several different pathways which the players can take to get through the adventure; and second, the GM can adjust the timeframe to adjust the difficulty level of the adventure, based on the party's experience. It is suggested that the average party arrive in Nashville about two weeks before September 22. The GM may wish to allow a larger or more experienced party less time, while a smaller or less experienced party may be allowed more time.

Elaine Avergnon

Fair complexion, brown eyes, grey hair; average appearance; 5'5", 125 pounds; 61 years old — 25 points.

ST 8, DX 8, IQ 13, HT 10.

Basic Speed 4.5; Move 4.

Dodge 4.

Quirks: Dislikes any non-university persons; Dislikes students; Likes romance novels; Likes flowers and gardening; Likes the smell of a pipe.

Skills: Accounting-13; Administration-17; Research-14.

Languages: English-13; French-13; German-14; Latin-14.

Elaine is a spinster in her early sixties. She is cold and reserved, and will do her best to keep visitors from disturbing the doctor.

The Cherokee Alphabet

The Cherokee are probably best known as the only Native American people to develop a system of writing. Many Indian nations had systems for recalling important events — such as the picture-writing of the Maya and Aztecs, or the beaded wampum belts of the Delaware, Iroquois and Chippewa — but these were not true writing systems. They were “recall systems,” using symbols (known only to a few tribal members) to trigger the memory, enabling story tellers and shamans to pass down the spiritual ceremonies, songs, legends, tales of migrations and treaties of the tribe.

Sequoyah realized that “talking leaves” — the pages in books — were the key to the survival of his people in the white man’s world. He dedicated his life to the invention and teaching of the Cherokee alphabet, or syllabary. In a single lifetime, he accomplished alone what entire nations had taken hundreds of years to do. He developed a complete alphabet, apparently between the years of 1809 and 1821! By 1844, most of the Cherokee in North Carolina and Oklahoma were reading and writing their own language. In a mere 35 years, an alphabet had been invented and perfected by a single man, then learned and put into everyday use by an entire nation — a feat never duplicated before or since!

The sounds represented by vowels in Cherokee words are:

- a*, as *a* in father, or short as *a* in rival (*ah*);
- e*, as *a* in hate, or short as *e* in met (*ay*, or *eh*);
- i*, as *i* in pique, or short as *i* in pit (*ee*, or *ih*);
- o*, as *o* in note, approaching *aw* in law (*aw*);
- u*, as *oo* in fool, or short as *u* in pull (*oo*);
- y*, as *u* in but, nasalized (*unh*).

The consonant sounds are:

- g*, nearly as in English, but approaching *k* (*gh*);
- d*, nearly as in English, but approaching *t*;
- h — k — l — m — n — q — s — t — w — y*, as in English;
- Syllables beginning with *g* are sometimes sounded as *k*;
- Syllables written as *go*, *du*, *dv* are sometimes sounded *to*, *do*, *dv*;
- Syllables written as *tl* are sometimes sounded *dl*;

The Cherokee language contains no *f*, *p*, *b*, *th*, *r* or *z*, and *m* is relatively rare.

Glossary

- Adan'ta* (ah-DAH-n-tah). Soul.
- Ada'wehi* (ah-DAH-weh-hee). Magician or supernatural being.
- Asgi'na* (ahs-KEE-nah). Ghost; the devil.
- Gakv'ta* (gawk-TUNH-tah). A taboo; the setting of something apart and away from human contact, either as consecrated or as accursed.
- Hayv'* (hah-YUNH). Yes, sir!
- Ka'lanu Ahyeli'ski* (KAH-lah-new eye-ell-EE-shkee). The Raven Mocker.
- Ka'lanu Gu'ni Nunyu'* (KAH-lah-new KOO-nee nunh-YOU). Raven Stone Arrow.
- Svna'yi Eda'hi* (sunh-NAW-yee ay-DAW-hee). “Night Goer;” a witch.
- Ugista'ti* (oo-gee-SHTA-tee). A consideration received by a doctor or shaman for his services. This is not “pay” in the everyday sense of the word; rather, it is a gift given in exchange for the gift of the shaman’s services. It usually takes the form of tobacco, cloth or an item of specific worth or significance to the shaman.
- U'ya igawa'sti* (OO-yah ih-gaw-WAH-shtee). “The Imprecator;” a witch.
- Wadan'* (wah-DAWN). Thanks!
- Yvn'wini'giski Ama'yine'hi* (YUNH-wih-NEE-kih-shkee ah-MAH-yih-NIGH-hee). The Water Cannibals.

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