

SIXGUNS & SKYSHIPS

A CAMPAIGN OUTLINE FOR S. JOHN ROSS ~~RISUS~~ THE ANYTHING RPG

BY GUY HOYLE © 2012

"The *War for Southern Independence* was six years done, and the triumphant *Federal Union* was pursuing its dream of *Manifest Destiny* from sea to shining sea. Those who fought and died in vain for states' rights had no choice but to forswear their independence and accept *Restoration*. Some never did, and those few found themselves drifting - going to the furthest edges of the continent to the lands less civilized, some barely settled, where the Union might not dictate their lives. These were rough places, and work was hard to come by. Those who got by lived by a simple code: 'Any job, no questions asked.'"

The setting: An alternate *America*, circa 1871, where history has followed the same broad outlines as ours, with some very different details. There was a kind of *Civil War*, and the *South* lost there, too. *Abraham Lincoln* was assassinated and *Ulysses S. Grant* is now President. However, science has produced a "non-explosive" form of hydrogen, called *phlogiston*, which is used in lighter-than-air vessels. *Clockwork automatons* are becoming more common.

CAMPAIGN SEEDS

- The PCs are the ragtag crew of a cobbled-together phlogiston-ship, trying to scratch out a more-or-less honest living on the Western frontier (mostly by cargo runs and smuggling) and keeping out of the way of the Union. The crew is driven by the necessity to earn enough to keep their ship operational, as well as to keep a low profile to avoid notice by the Union authorities.
- The PCs are notorious outlaws, secretly working for the Federal governor in exchange for amnesty. Nobody knows this except for the territorial governor. They have to keep their arrangement secret because working with known outlaws could be a political liability for the governor.

VILLAINS OF NOTE

- Criminals and schemers, who can be enemies, allies, employers, or a combination of all three.
- Union authorities and agents, who take a dim view of the borderline-criminal activities the PCs are often forced to undertake.
- Ex-Confederates (a.k.a the Conspiracy) who conspire to overthrow the Union; zealous, paranoid, and dangerous.
- Ghost Dancers: Native American mystic warriors following a messianic leader who promises to bring back the buffalo herds and take back the lands stolen from them by the Union.

ADVENTURE SEEDS

- The PCs are approached by a of a wealthy Japanese tourist and his family, who want to tour *America* without frills. They are willing to pay an exorbitant sum, but some of their requests seem... non-touristy. Are they spies of Meiji Japan, out to spy on *American* secrets, or are they just slightly eccentric?
- Legitimate jobs are few and far between these days because of recent Union activity in this area. The ship is running low on phlogiston, and the crew must decide on taking on safe, low-paying jobs, or to take a risky, high-paying job that would compromise their principles.
- An old war buddy calls on the PCs, cashing in on a large favor. Trouble is, it runs the risk of bringing the PCs to the attention of the Union. Even worse, NOT doing the job means that Konfederacy conspirators will come after the old war buddy... and if you're not working WITH the Conspiracy, you're working AGAINST them!

SOME SAMPLE CLICHES

Action Girl	Famous Literary	Lady of Adventure	Schoolmarm
Bookworm	Character	Longcoat	Sheriff
Bounty Hunter	Federal Agent	Mad Scientist	Sky Baron
Bureaucrat	Federak Officer	Master of Disguise	Sky Pilot
Cattle Puncher	Fictionalized Historical	Mechanical Monster	Sky Pirate
Cattle Rustler	Character	Mr. Fixit	Soiled Dove (Hooker
Civil War Veteran	Gambler	Officer & a Gentleman	w. a Heart of Gold)
Clockwork Creature	Gentleman Adventurer	Proper Lady	Spirited Young Lady
Damsel in Distress	Gentleman & a Scholar	Rail Baron	Steampunk Gadeteer
Dance Hall Girl	Ghost Dancers	Saloon Owner/	Town Drunk
Determined Widow	Gunslinger	Bartender	Train Robber
Drifter	Hired Gun	Sawbones	Wrench Wench